



Adams 150.10



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# CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

## LATE PRESIDENT ADAMS.

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No.—7.  
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### LETTER XLI.

DECEMBER 30, 1780, wrote to congress. “ The province of Zealand having been opposed to the other provinces in so many instances, and having lately protested against the resolutions of the states general, which begin to be thought spirited, it may be useful to explain to congress the causes which influence that province to a conduct which is generally thought to be opposite to the true interests of the republic in general.

In the states of Zealand there are only five voices, three of which are absolutely in the discretion of the prince of Orange, who has one voice as stadtholder of the province, another as marquis of Veere, and a third as first noble. The stadtholder is therefore absolute in this province; which accounts at once, for its conduct upon all occasions. The friends of the prince, of England and Zealand, are not willing, however, that the world should believe that the prince's power in the province, and his attachment to England, are the sole causes of its conduct upon every occasion, and therefore they enlarge upon several topics, as apologies and excuses for a behavior which cannot wholly be justified. The arguments in justification or excuse of Zealand, are drawn from four principal sources. 1. The situation of the islands which compose the province. 2. The interest of its particular commerce. 3. The weakness of its interior forces. 4. The state of its finances.

1. The territory of Zealand consists of five or six islands, two of which are moderately large, and the rest very small. These islands are formed by the sea, or by the different branches of the Scheld, in the mouth of that river. In case of a sudden invasion, these islands, separated from the province of Holland by an arm of the sea, are too unconnected to receive any immediate assistance. Such an invasion is so much the more easy for the English to attempt, as Zealand is very near them. They may invade this province even before a suspicion could be conceived, that such a project had been formed. Who shall oppose their enterprize? Shall it be the French, who are now friendly? Dunkirk, it is true, is near enough. But what forces are there at Dunkirk? The only naval force there, consists of a few privateers, who could neither oppose an armament escorted by British men of war, nor venture to transport troops to oppose it, even supposing the invasion was not made by surprize. Shall the Zealanders themselves make a resistance to the English? But separated from one another by waters which would necessarily retard their junction, the island of Walcheren, the principal of all, would be in possession of the enemy, before they could put themselves in a posture to repel force by force. It is moreover, not only possible, but easy, to make a descent upon Zealand by so many places at once, that the inhabitants, by their own forces alone, could not defend effectually all the passages. Eight thousand English troops, or even a smaller number, would force the Zealanders every where, because there is no where a fortress capable of holding out twelve hours. The ports of Flushing and Veere are the only ones which have any defence. But they are very far from the state in which they ought to be, to stop an enemy determined upon pillage, animated by revenge, and forcibly instigated by the pleasure of doing mischief. It is conceded that the English descended in Zealand, would be constrained to abandon it very soon; that they might and would be driven from it in a few days; that the figure they would make, would be neither glorious nor honorable; and

that their temerity would cost them dear : but the disorder caused by an invasion remains after the expulsion of the invaders. The people invaded are always the victims of the evils which they have suffered ; and these evils, always considerable to the individuals, are seldom, if ever, entirely compensated. The Zealander says, when an incendiary has burned my house, whether he is punished or not, my house is consumed and lost to me. The exactions, the pillage, and all the abominations which follow the coups de main of an unbridled soldiery, would be cruelly felt by the unfortunate Zealanders, even after the perpetrators should be driven out or sacrificed to public resentment. For example, in 1761, fifteen thousand English forces landed in the neighborhood of the village of St. Ka, situated on the northern coast of Britany, in France : from thence they extended themselves to the village of Kankale, in the neighborhood of the former. They pillaged the houses of the inhabitants ; broke their furniture ; took away their provisions and cattle ; and violated their wives and daughters. Six soldiers ripped open, with a knife, a woman big with child, after having fatiated one after another, their brutality. In a word, the English gave a free course to their cruelty, and indulged themselves in all sorts of excesses, which the laws of war reprobate, as well as those of nature. The massacre of the pregnant woman of Britany may be put in parallel with that of the unfortunate women whom the savages, under the command of general Burgoyne, scalped in America. These acts of cruelty prove, at least, to what excesses the fury of the English army may proceed. But it is asked, if it can be said that all the disorders committed in Britany were repaired, when the ten thousand French ran to the assistance of these unfortunate Britains, and had killed, taken and drowned the whole English army ? No: The miserable inhabitants of St. Ka and of Kankale, were not less ruined ; their wives and daughters were not the less dishonored ; and in one word, the English fury did not remain the less deeply imprinted on this part of Britany in characters of blood. In truth, England lost fifteen

thousand men, without deriving the smallest advantage from their temerity : but the French employed against the English at St. Ka, did nothing but avenge the honor of their nation : France only made her rival feel how dangerous it is to insult the firesides of her subjects. This lesson may have intimidated the English, but it is not certain that it has corrected them. A sheepfold, situated on the borders of a forest, is always exposed to the ravages of the wolves, if the shepherd cannot watch all the avenues. If the wolves enter and tear a part of the flock, the shepherd will have lost the sheep that are devoured ; and if afterwards he should kill some of these carnivorous animals, the skin of the wolf will not indemnify the loss of the sheep.

2. The peculiar commerce of Zealand. This province has no other than that small commerce, which is known by the name of coasting trade. This kind of intercourse is considerable in the provinces of Holland, North Holland and Friesland : the number of vessels employed in it, in these three provinces, is inconceivable, and the greatest part of them are destined for the service of France. All which, France receives from foreigners, and all that it furnishes to foreigners is carried in these Holland vessels ; and if there were no other than the freight for the masters and owners of these vessels, this profit would still be of the greatest consideration. Thus it is not surprising that the province of Holland has taken such strong measures in favor of France. Its particular commerce would naturally determine it that way. On the contrary, Zealand employs the small number of her merchant ships in a commerce with England : a commerce so much the more lucrative, as it is almost entirely contraband, or smuggled. The profits to be made on brandy, and other spirituous liquors, imported clandestinely into England, are very great : and it is Zealand that makes these profits, because they are her citizens who entertain a continual correspondence with the English smugglers. The proximity of the coasts of Zealand to those of England, renders this commerce, which is prohibited to English subjects, sure for



the inhabitants of Zealand. Fishing boats are sufficient to carry it on ; and these barques are rarely taken, whether it is, that they are difficult to take, or whether there is not much desire to take them. These barques, arrived on the coasts of England, find others which come to take what they bring. The place where this traffic is held, is generally some creek, upon the coast of England, where the vessels may be loaded and unloaded in secrecy. Moreover, those whom the English ministry appoint to prevent this commerce at sea, are those who favor it. We know very well, the decided inclination of the English in general, and above all, of their seamen, for strong liquors. Zealand, concurring openly in the measures which the republic is now taking against England, or if you will, against the powers at war, would draw upon itself particularly, the anger, hatred and vengeance of a nation, without which it is impossible to sustain its trade. And this province would by this means deprive a great number of its citizens of a source of gain, which places them in a condition to furnish the imposts which they have to pay. Is it not then the part of prudence in the states of Zealand, to avoid with care, every thing that might embroil them particularly with England? Is it not also the wisdom of the states general, to have a regard to the critical situation of one of the seven provinces which compose the union?

3. The weakness of her internal forces. Zealand is open, on all sides, to the English. To set them at defiance, she ought to have in herself, forces capable of intimidating Great Britain. But where are such forces to be found? In the garrisons which the republic maintains there? Two or three thousand men, dispersed at Flushing, at Veere, and in some other cities, are but a feeble defence against a descent of six or seven thousand English, well determined. Will these troops of the republic be supported by armed citizens? Suppose it—Their defeat will not be less certain. Those citizens who have never seen a loaded musquet discharged, are more proper to carry an empty fusée, to mount guard at a state-house which is never to be attacked, than to march to the defence of a

coast threatened with a descent, or to present themselves upon a parapet of a fort, battered with machines that vomit forth death, and scatter it on the ramparts. These citizens, or rather these soldiers of a moment, would carry disorder into the ranks, and do more injury than service, by giving countenance to the flight of those brave warriors, who make it a point of honor to combat with a steadfast foot. Moreover, who are these citizens that might be joined to the regular troops? Are they the principal inhabitants? Those who have the most to lose? Those to whom birth and education have given sentiments of honor and glory? No. These have, by paying sums of money, exemptions, which excuse them from taking arms to defend the country in time of peace. Is it credible, that in the most critical moment, they will generously renounce these exemptions? It will be then, the citizens of the second order, the artisans, or people who have little or nothing to lose, who will serve for the reinforcement of the veterans. Experience demonstrates what dependence is to be placed at this day, upon such militia. It would be in vain to oppose to this reasoning the time of the revolution, those times of the heroism of the ancestors of the Dutch. The cause is not the same. They attack, at this day, in a different fashion, and perhaps the defence too would be made in a very different manner. It might be otherwise, if the coasts of Zealand were fortified with good forts, or if the cities of Flushing and Veere were in a condition to sustain a siege of some months, and with their little garrisons, stop the assailants until the arrival of succors; but one must be very little informed not to know that the English, although they might be incommoded in their landing, would nevertheless effect it with little loss.

4. The state of her finances. Zealand, of all the seven provinces, is that which costs the most for the maintenance of her Dykes. More exposed than all the others to be drowned by the sea, her coasts require continued repairs. These reparations cannot be made but at great expense. Unprovided with wood, suitable for the construction of ramparts capable of stopping the waves which

beat upon her continually, she is obliged to import, from foreign countries, those numberless and enormous timbers which art substitutes in the place of those rocks which nature has granted to other countries, for holding out the ocean and restraining its fury. It is necessary, therefore, that a great part of the public revenue of the province should go to foreigners. She must, moreover, furnish her quota to the general treasury of the republic. From whence it follows, that she cannot expose herself to the indispensable necessity of increasing her imposts to furnish the new expenses, which an extraordinary armament would bring upon all the state. More than once, in time of peace, the public coffers of the state have been obliged to furnish to the province of Zealand the succors which she could not find at home, without reducing her subjects to the most horrible distress. To what condition then would these subjects be reduced, if in the progress of the armed neutrality, such as is proposed, or in a war with England, they should be obliged to pay new contributions? All the world agrees that Zealand is poor. It must be acknowledged then, that she will be plunged in the lowest indigence, if the expenses of the country are augmented, although there are many individuals who are very rich, and grand capitalists, and luxury among the great is carried to an excess as immoderate as it is in Holland.

Zealand has so long embarrassed the republic in all their deliberations concerning the armed neutrality, and lately concerning the serious quarrel that England has commenced against her, that I thought it would at least gratify the curiosity of congress, to see the causes which have governed her, laid open, as I find them explained in conversation and in public writings. Zealand's reasons seem, however, to be now overruled, and the prince's absolute authority there of little avail. To all appearance, the English must recede, or contend with a bitter enemy in this republic. Old prejudices seem to wear off: and it is now said publicly that the friendship between the English and Dutch has been like the brotherly love between Cain and Abel. Yet I have been so often disappointed

in my expectations, that I can never depend upon any thing here until it is past."

December 31, 1780, wrote to congress. "It will scarcely be believed in congress, that at a time when there are the strongest appearances of war, there has not been a newspaper nor a letter received in this city (Amsterdam) from London, since the 19th or 20th of the month.

There are symptoms of a more general war. If Britain adheres to her maxims, this republic will demand the aid of Russia, Sweden, Denmark and Prussia, in pursuance of the treaty of armed neutrality. These powers will not be duped by the artifices of the English court, and adjudge this war not a *Casus Fœderis*, when all the world agrees that the accession of the republic to the armed neutrality, is the real cause of it, and the treaty between Mr. Lee and Mr. De Neufville only a false pretext. If the armed neutral confederacy takes it up, as nobody doubts they will, all these powers will be soon at war with England, if she does not recede. If the neutral powers do not take it up, and England proceeds, she will drive the republic into the arms of France, Spain and America. In this possible case a minister here from congress would be useful. In case the armed neutrality take it up, a minister authorised to represent the United States at all the neutral courts might be of use.

The empress queen (Mary Theresia) is no more. The emperor has procured his brother Maximilian to be declared co-adjutor of the bishoprick of Minister and Cologne, which affects Holland and the low countries. He is supposed to have his eye on Liege. This may alarm the Dutch, the king of Prussia, and France. The war may become general and the fear of it may make peace. That is, it might, if the king of England was not the most determined man in the world. But depressed, distracted, and ruined as his dominions are, he will set all Europe in a blaze, before he will make peace. His exertions against us, however, cannot be very formidable. Patience, firmness and perseverance are our only remedy. These are sure and infallible. And with this observation I have

the honor to take my leave of congress for the year 1780, which has been to me the most anxious and mortifying year of my life. God grant that more vigor, wisdom, and decision may govern the counsels, negotiations and operations of mankind in the year 1781."

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, September 8, 1809.

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LETTER XLII.

AMSTERDAM, January 1, 1780, wrote to congress. "The mail from London arrived this morning, brought us for a new year's entertainment, the following

*MANIFESTO.*

GEORGE R.

Through the whole course of our reign, our conduct towards the states general of the United Provinces, has been that of a sincere friend and faithful ally. Had they adhered to those wise principles which used to govern the republic, they must have shewn themselves equally solicitous to maintain the friendship which has so long subsisted between the two nations; and *which is essential to the interests of both.* But from the prevalence of a faction devoted to France, and following the dictates of that court, a very different policy has prevailed. The return made to our friendship for some time past, has been an open contempt of the most solemn engagements, and a repeated violation of public faith.

On the commencement of the *defensive war*, in which we found ourselves engaged, *by the aggression of France*, we shewed a *tender regard* to the interests of the states general, and a desire of securing to their subjects every advantage of trade consistent with the great and just principles of *our own defence.* Our ambassador was instructed to offer a friendly negotiation, to obviate every thing that might lead to disagreeable discussions; and to this offer, solemnly made by him to the states general, the 2d of November, 1778, no attention was paid.

After the number of our enemies increased, *by the aggression of Spain*, equally unprovoked with that of France, we found it necessary to call upon the states general for the performance of their engagements. The fifth article of the perpetual defensive alliance between our crown and the states general, concluded at Westminster, the 3d of March, 1678, besides the general engagement for succors, expressly stipulates, “That that party of the two allies that is *not attacked*, shall be obliged to break with the aggressor, in two months after the party attacked shall require it”—yet two years have passed without the least assistance given to us, without a single syllable in answer to our repeated demands.

So totally regardless have the states been of their treaties with us, that they readily promised to observe a neutrality, in direct contradiction to those engagements; and whilst they have withheld from us the succors they were bound to furnish, every secret assistance has been given to the enemy, and inland duties have been taken off for the sole purpose of facilitating the carriage of naval stores to France.

In direct and open violation of treaty, they suffered an American pirate to remain several weeks in one of their ports, and even permitted a part of his crew to mount guard in a fort in the Texel.

In the East Indies, the subjects of the states general, in concert with France, have endeavored to raise up enemies against us.

In the West Indies, particularly at St. Eustatia, every protection and assistance has been given to our rebellious subjects. Their privateers are openly received in the Dutch harbors; allowed to refit there; supplied with arms and ammunition; their crews recruited; their prizes brought in and sold; and all this in direct violation of as clear and solemn stipulations as can be made.

This conduct, so inconsistent with all good faith, so repugnant to the sense of the wisest part of the Dutch nation, is chiefly to be ascribed to the prevalence of the leading magistrates of Amsterdam, whose secret corres-

pondence with our rebellious subjects was suspected long before it was made known by the fortunate discovery of a treaty, the first article of which is, that

‘ There shall be a firm, inviolable and universal peace, and sincere friendship, between their high mightinesses the states of the seven United Provinces of Holland, and the United States of North America, and the subjects and people of the said parties ; and between the countries, islands, cities and towns, situated under the jurisdiction of the said United States of Holland, and the said United States of America, and the people and inhabitants thereof, of every degree, without exception of persons or places.’

This treaty was signed in September, 1778, by the express order of the pensionary of Amsterdam, [Mr. Van Berckel to Mr. De Neufville] and other principal magistrates of that city [viz. the burgomasters Temmink, Hoofdt, &c.] They now not only avow the whole transaction, but glory in it, and expressly say, even to the states general, that what they did, was what their indispensable duty required.

In the mean time, the states general declined to give any answer to the memorial presented by our ambassador ; and this refusal was aggravated by their proceeding upon other business, nay, upon the consideration of this very subject, to internal purposes ; and while they found it impossible to approve the conduct of their subjects, they still industriously avoided to give us the satisfaction so manifestly due.

We had every right to expect, that such a discovery would have roused them to a just indignation at the insult offered to us, and to themselves ; and that they would have been eager to give us full and ample satisfaction for the offence, and to inflict the severest punishment upon the offenders. The urgency of the business made an instant answer *essential to the honor and safety of this country*. The demand was accordingly pressed by our ambassador, in repeated conferences with the ministers, and in a second memorial : it was pressed with all the earnestness which

could proceed from our ancient friendship, and the sense of recent injuries : and the answer now given to a memorial on such a subject, presented more than five weeks ago, is, that the states have taken it *ad referendum*. Such an answer, upon such an occasion, could only be dictated by the fixed purpose of hostility, meditated and already resolved by the states, induced by the offensive counsels of Amsterdam, thus to countenance the hostile aggression, which the magistrates of that city have made in the name of the republic.

There is an end of the faith of all treaties with them, if Amsterdam may usurp the sovereign power ; - may violate those treaties with impunity, by pledging the states to engagements directly contrary, and leaguings the republic with the rebels of a sovereign, to whom she is bound by the closest ties. *An infraction of the law of nations, by the meanest member of any country, gives the injured state a right to demand satisfaction and punishment :* How much more so, when the injury complained of, is a flagrant violation of public faith, committed by leading and predominant members of the state ? Since then the satisfaction we have demanded, is not given, we must, though most reluctantly, do ourselves that justice which we cannot otherwise obtain : We must consider the states general as parties in the injury which they will not repair ; as sharers in the aggression which they refuse to punish ; and must act accordingly. We have therefore ordered our ambassador to withdraw from the Hague, and shall immediately pursue such vigorous measures as the occasion fully justifies, and our dignity and the essential interest of our people require.

From a regard to the Dutch nation at large, we wish it were possible, to direct those measures wholly against Amsterdam ; but this cannot be, unless the states general will immediately declare, that Amsterdam shall, upon this occasion, receive no assistance from them, but be left to abide the consequences of its aggression. Whilst Amsterdam is suffered to prevail in the general counsels, and is



backed by the strength of the state, it is impossible to resist the aggression of so considerable a part, without contending with the whole. *But we are too sensible of the common interests of both countries, not to remember in the midst of such a contest, that the only point to be aimed at by us, is, to raise a disposition in the counsels of the republic, to return to our ancient union, by giving us that satisfaction for the past, and security for the future, which we shall be as ready to receive as they can be to offer, and to the attainment of which, we shall direct all our operations.* We mean only to provide for our own security, by defeating the dangerous designs that have been formed against us. We shall ever be disposed to return to friendship with the states general, when they sincerely revert to that system which the wisdom of their ancestors formed, and which has now been subverted by a powerful faction, conspiring with France against the true interests of the republic, no less than against those of Great Britain. G. R.

*St. James's, Dec. 20, 1780.*

*At the Court of St. James's, the 20th of December, 1780.*  
Present,

“The king’s most excellent majesty in council.

His majesty having taken into consideration the many injurious proceedings of the states general of the United Provinces, and their subjects, as set forth in his royal manifesto of this date; and being determined to take such measures as are necessary for vindicating the honor of his crown, and for procuring reparation and satisfaction, is pleased, by and with the advice of his privy council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that general reprisals be granted against the ships, goods and subjects of the states general of the United Provinces, so that, as well his majesty’s fleets and ships, as also all other ships and vessels that shall be commissioned by letters of marque or general reprisals, or otherwise, by his majesty’s commissioners, for executing the office of lord high admiral of Great Britain, shall and may lawfully seize all ships, vessels and goods belonging to the states general of the United Pro-

inces or their subjects, or others inhabiting within any of the territories of the aforefaid states general, and bring the same to judgment in any of the courts of admiralty within his majesty's dominions. And to that end his majesty's advocate general, with the advocate of the admiralty are forthwith to prepare the draught of a commission, and present the same to his majesty at this board, authorising the commissioners for executing the office of lord high admiral, or any person or persons by them empowered and appointed, to issue forth and grant letters of marque and reprisal to any of his majesty's subjects, or others whom the said commissioners shall deem fitly qualified in that behalf, for the apprehending, seizing and taking the ships, vassals and goods belonging to the states general of the United Provinces, and their vessels and subjects, or any inhabiting within the countries, territories or dominions of the aforefaid states general; and that such powers and clauses be inserted in the said commission as have been usual, and are according to former precedents; and his majesty's said advocate general, with the advocate of the admiralty, are also forthwith to prepare the draught of a commission, and present the same to his majesty at this board, authorising the said commissioners for executing the office of lord high admiral to will and require the high court of admiralty of Great Britain and the lieutenant and judge of said court, his surrogate or surrogates, as also the several courts of admiralty within his majesty's dominions to take cognizance of, and judicially proceed upon all, and all manner of captures, seizures, prizes and reprisals of all ships and goods that are or shall be taken, and to hear and determine the same; and accordingly to adjudge and condemn all such ships, vessels and goods as shall belong to the states general of the United Provinces, or their vassals and subjects, or to any others inhabiting within any of the countries, territories and dominions of the aforefaid states general; and that such powers and clauses be inserted in said commission as have been usual, and are according to former precedents; and they are likewise to prepare and lay before his majesty at this

board, a draught of such instructions as may be proper to be sent to the courts of admiralty in his majesty's foreign governments and plantations, for their guidance herein ; as also, another draught of instructions for such ships as shall be commissioned for the purposes aforementioned."

The Dutch nation had still flattered itself with a hope that the British government would not proceed to the last extremity ; but this manifesto, if it did not extinguish all hopes of avoiding a war, struck the whole republic with such a violent shock as produced an universal and solemn gloom. No man dared to speak, or to think what would be the consequence of it. Every man seemed to be afraid of his neighbor and his best friend. Such was the terror of the vengeance of the republic against Amsterdam, and of the populace against Mr. Van Berckel, and even the American minister was not thought to be safe. I was avoided like a pestilence. I might have returned to Paris, or removed to Antwerp or Brussels, out of all danger ; but I determined to abide at my post, and share the fate of my friends.

A crowd of observations and reflections, present themselves upon this manifesto ; but as it would ill become me to dogmatize upon a subject which enters so deeply into the whole history and policy of Europe, I shall confine myself to a few queries.

1. Does it not discover a strong sense of the importance of Holland to the interest of England in the then actual state of Europe, which it is difficult to reconcile with any valuable and reasonable national object which the declaration of war might have in view ?

2. Does it not betray a perfect knowledge of the history of Barneveldt, Grotius, the De Witts, and the revolution of 1756, and a deliberate design to excite in a similar manner the republic against Amsterdam, and the populace against Mr. Van Berckel ?

3. Does it not shew an oblivion or inattention to the history of the rise and progress of English and Dutch commerce and manufactures, and of the grandeur of Lon-

don and Amsterdam, erected as they had been upon the occlusion of the Sheld, the Maese, the Lis, and all the rivers and canals connected with them, and upon the ruins of the commerce of Antwerp, Ostend, Nieuport, Bruges, and many other cities, indeed of the whole of the Austrian Netherlands ?

4. Were not the British ministry inattentive both to the former and the present state of Holland ? When the united arms and negociations of these two powers had effected such mighty things for their own aggrandizement, and the mortification and impoverishment of France and Germany, the Dutch had a navy equal or superior to the English, and had always insisted on the possession of the barrier towns, fortified with all the science and art of the age, and amply furnished with garrisons, as a defence against France. Now, the Dutch had so long been taught to depend on the British fleet for protection, that their navy had been totally neglected, and was reduced almost to nothing. The fortifications of the barrier towns had been wholly neglected and gone to ruins, and the garrisons withdrawn. The Dutch country was therefore exposed to be overrun and overwhelmed by France in a few days. And if Holland had joined England in the war she must have been at war with France, Spain and America. At a time too when the family alliance between the house of Bourbon and the house of Austria had produced a kind of friendship between France and Germany ; and when the emperor was known to entertain designs of opening the Sheld ?

5. Is it possible to believe, that the treaty of Mr. De Neufville and Mr. Lee could be the real motive, or any thing more than a very thin pretext for this war. That treaty was a mere nullity. Amsterdam had no authority to bind the republic, nor had Mr. De Neufville authority to bind the city. Mr. Lee, on the other hand, had no authority to bind congress or the United States. The English might as well have alledged a treaty between the rooks on the trees and the storks on the houses as a cause of war.

6. If the object was to prevent the republic from entering into future negotiations with the United States, and lending them money, was not this declaration of war the most certain of all means of compelling the Dutch to do what they meant to intimidate them from doing ?

7. Is it credible, that a motive so sordid as the spolia-tion of Dutch ships and merchandize, for the emolument of English ships of war and privateers, could have prevailed with the British ministry, to destroy at one blow, and forever, that balance of power to which their country owed its greatness ?

8. Were not the Dutch driven by this war to the desperate dilemma that of either surrendering their independence, or fighting the English and uniting with their enemies ?

9. Have our fellow citizens, who please themselves with the hope of an alliance with England, analyzed that strange jumble of interests which produced the old balance of power ? Have they considered that the jealousy between the house of Bourbon and the house of Austria was an essential ingredient in that unnatural composition ? The Bourbons consented to the occlusion of the Scheld, for the sake of the annihilation of the commerce of the Austrian Netherlands, and the Austrians consented to that annihilation for the sake of depriving France of the navigation of the Scheld. France and Germany have been mutually jealous of each others commerce.

10. Do our countrymen believe, that by uniting with England they can restore Holland to her naval power, her barrier towns, and her ancient warlike spirit ? That they can compel France and Germany to agree once more upon the ruin of the finest country in Europe, the Austrian Netherlands, and the occlusion of the best ports and rivers of Europe ?

11. May I be permitted to recommend to some of my young countrymen, to read all the treaties since that of Munster, and all the negotiations and histories of war and peace, since that period, and then consider whether some new balance of power has not become indispensable,

since it is manifest that the ancient one has totally destroyed the law of nations, and the liberty of the seas? But I forbear.

On the 4th of January, 1781, wrote to congress. "Notwithstanding the influence of the English nation, and of old prejudices and habits; the apprehensions which are entertained for immense sums in the English funds; and for the sudden destruction of an innumerable navigation, at the commencement of a war; and above all, notwithstanding the authority and influence of the stadtholder, I am confidently assured by several gentlemen, that the national opinion and affection is with us. The baron Van Der Capellen, with whom I have the honor of an agreeable acquaintance, is of opinion, that four fifths of the nation wish us success in our enterprize. The symptoms of popularity are decisive in Amsterdam. The Sunday before last, in the Presbyterian church, the parson beginning, as usual, to pray for the king of England, was absolutely interrupted by a general murmur. On Christmas day he attempted to repeat his imprudence, and was interrupted by still greater confusion; so that the last Sunday, he had learned discretion to leave out, wholly, this offensive clause in his devotions. On the evening of the new years day, at the theatre, the public were entertained with the national tragedy, as it is called, the Gysbrecht Van Amstel, after which, the actors, as is customary, addressed the audience. There were many strokes in this address which sufficiently indicated the spirit of the times, particularly a solemn injunction that *they must not be slaves*, and a quotation from a popular song, with which the streets have resounded for ten days, which were deeply and universally applauded. The presses swarm with pamphlets, handbills, songs and poems, generally much against the English, and commonly with some favorable hints concerning the Americans. The conversation in private families, and the toasts in jovial circles, indicate a tremendous spirit in the body of this people, which, if once let loose from restraint, and properly directed, would make this nation the worst enemy that England ever had. It is essential

to attend to these symptoms of popularity, at this time, and in this country, because it is manifest that the whole system of the English, in concert with their faction in the republic, is now bent to excite the populace against the burgomasters of Amsterdam. They succeeded, in 1748, and accomplished a change in the regency. If they could succeed in the same manner now, they would change the whole political system of this nation, and by this means, in the present situation of affairs in Europe and America, it is plain they would work its entire and irretrievable ruin.

Yet the course is so circuitous, to apply to the courts of Russia, Sweden and Denmark, to induce them to join in demanding satisfaction of England; the shocks upon 'change, by the sudden capture of so many ships, will be so great; so many insurers, merchants, &c. will be ruined; and there will be so many arts employed to divide and discourage the people, that I cannot pretend to foresee what will happen. The confusion is yet so great, that I have no hopes, at present, of obtaining money. There must be time for the fermentation to go off; and the quarrel with England must become, in the minds of all, irreconcilable, before we can try the experiment whether we have any credit or not.

If congress should think proper to send powers here to treat with the states general, I beg leave to submit to their consideration the case of Mr. Dumas. He was early employed in our affairs here, has neglected all other business, has been attentive and industrious, and is a gentleman of extensive learning and amiable character. I believe he is not ambitious nor avaricious, but moderate in his expectations. Whoever shall be honored with powers from congress to reside here, would find his assistance useful, for he is much devoted to the American cause. I hope, therefore, congress will pardon me, if I venture to recommend him to their attention."

January 8, 1781, wrote to congress a recapitulation. "On the 10th November, 1780, the memorial of sir Joseph Yorke to the states general was presented for a

disavowal, satisfaction proportioned to the offence, and punishment of the guilty.

November 28—a formal disapprobation of the states general of the conduct of the regency of Amsterdam.

December 12—second memorial of sir Joseph Yorke, for a satisfaction proportioned to the offence, and punishment of the guilty.

December 14—answer of the states general, dispatched by express to London, importing that their high mightinesses had taken the said memorials *ad referendum*.

December 16—order of his Britannic majesty to sir Joseph Yorke, to withdraw from the Hague, without taking leave, dispatched by express; arrived at the Hague the 23d.

December 19—letter of the count de Welden to the states general, acknowledging the receipt of those of the 12th and 15th; arrived the same day, the 19th, with the declaration of the states general, touching their accession to the confederation of the north.

December 20—signature of the manifesto of his Britannic majesty, published 21st, in the London Gazette, extraordinary.

December 21—expedition of an express to sir Joseph Yorke, arrived at the Hague the 23d, at night, with the manifesto, published the 21st.

December 22—resolution of the states general, to refer the affair of the satisfaction and punishment of the guilty, to the provincial court of justice.

December 25—departure of sir Joseph Yorke for Antwerp.

December 26—expedition of an express to the count de Welden, with orders to present the declaration touching the confederation of the north, and to withdraw from London without taking leave.

December 28—the ordinary packet from London not yet arrived, and the last letters from London are of the 19th.

In this rapid succession have events rolled after one another, as those terrible surges of the sea, which, in



some stormy seasons, lash the dykes which defend the country from inundation, and threaten to break down all before them, and lay the whole nation under water, until a war has seemingly become inevitable.

The prince of Orange has made a proposition or requisition to the states general to augment their navy with fifty or sixty vessels of war, and their army with fifty or sixty thousand men. The ships of war will be agreed to, but the troops will not, as I am informed. But once more I beg leave to say, I can believe nothing until it is past."

JOHN ADAMS.

*Quincy, September 12, 1809.*

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### LETTER XLIII.

AMSTERDAM, January 14, 1781, wrote to congress. "In an excursion which I have lately made through the principal cities of this province, that is, Hærlém, Leyden, the Hague, Delph, and Rotterdam, I have had an opportunity of perceiving, that there is a spirit of resentment against the English, very general among the people. Notwithstanding this, every thing is so artfully retarded; the manifesto, the letters of marque, and above all the decision of the court of justice of Holland, is so studiously delayed, while the English are making such vast depredations upon the defenceless merchant vessels of the Dutch, that I cannot yet be sure that war is decided. The councils of the prince, united with those of the proprietors of the British funds, and the distresses of merchants, may yet induce the republic against the general sense of the nation, to sue for a dishonorable peace.

I have, however, since my return, received a letter from the Hague of last Friday, from Mr. Dumas, which informs me, that a letter is received from the plenipotentiaries at Petersburg, dated the 19th of December, announcing, that the empress of Russia was well satisfied with all that had passed; that she had seen the two last

memorials presented by fir Joseph Yorke to their high mightinesses ; and that she had more indignation than surprize at the sight of them. It may be doubted, however, whether this is not a mistake, as the memorial was dated the 12th, and the letter of the ministers the 19th ; that the signature was to be on the 23d ; after which, those ministers were to display the characters of ambassadors extraordinary ; that they would forthwith dispatch another express with the convention signed. This express is now expected every moment ; and as soon as it arrives their high mightinesses will publish their manifesto. This little delay is said to be a pure formality. In the mean time they resolved on the 12th of this month to distribute letters of marque to privateers, and orders to the ships of state, to seize every thing they can belonging to the English.

Notwithstanding this, there are no privateers ready ; and I fear there are fewer ships of war ready than there ought to be. It will be long before the Dutch can do any great things, and they must suffer very severely. Such are the effects of blind and mistaken policy. [This might have been better expressed, by saying---*Such are the effects of depending on the protection of the British navy.*]

War is so new and so terrible a thing to this people ; they are so divided in sentiments ; their minds are so agitated with uncertainty, irresolution and apprehension, that there is as yet no possibility of borrowing any money. I must, therefore, repeat the request, that congress would not think of drawing for any more, until they receive certain advices from me that there is some in hand."

January 15, 1781, wrote to congress. "The prince on the 26th of December, made a proposition to the states general, in substance, That his most serene highness had already communicated the last year to the respective provinces, his advice to equip fifty or sixty vessels of war, and to augment the last forces to fifty or sixty thousand men ; to put the frontier places in a good state of defence ; and to provide necessary magazines of warlike stores, to the end, to be in a condition to defend the lawful rights of

the republic : that his most serene highness had seen with satisfaction, that as far as respected the marine it has been made better in some degree ; and that he flattered himself that the states of all the provinces would reinforce it for the ensuing year, with redoubled zeal, since they could not be too much upon their guard in the present conjuncture ; that it was equally necessary to put the republic in a convenient state of defence on the land side ; and that he hoped they would at this day think seriously of it ; that they would augment the fortifications, and supply the magazines, since if they failed in this, his most serene highness would not be responsible for the events, &c.

The states general, after having thanked the stadtholder for his assiduous zeal, and solicitude to maintain the republic in the engagement of its liberty and independence, resolved, “ That the proposition of his most serene highness should be communicated to the respective provinces ; and that it should be represented to them, that his most serene highness, animated with the purest love of his country, insists, with reason, at this day, when the danger is immediate, and war appears inevitable, upon the necessity of making unanimous efforts to the end to resist this danger, and to preserve the republic by joining courage to prudence, that the maritime forces of the republic are not yet sufficient to protect the commerce, the source of the well being of the public, in all its branches ; and to ensure from all invasion the possessions of the republic, both in the East and West Indies ; that therefore, their high mightinesses, think themselves under obligation to pray the members of the union, in a manner the most friendly and the most pressing, to fix their attention as soon as possible upon these objects, and to accomplish them with vigor, since the storm which approaches at sea, may easily, by a sudden revolution, discharge itself upon the continent ; so that an augmentation of land forces is as indispensably necessary as the armament by sea. That from these motives, their high mightinesses assure themselves, that since there no longer remains for the republic a choice

between peace and war, the respective members of the union will endeavor, as far as possible, to defend their country, and all that is dear to them, by acting with unanimity, courage and candor."

January 15, 1781, wrote to congress. "The following is the declaration of the states general of their accession to the armed neutrality.

### DECLARATION.

Their high mightinesses, the states general of the United Provinces of the low countries, having had nothing more at heart since the commencement of the present war; and having desired nothing more earnestly, than to observe invariably, the most strict, and the most perfect neutrality, between the belligerent powers, and to fulfil at the same time their essential and indispensable obligations, by granting a convenient protection to the commerce and the navigation of their subjects, and by maintaining and defending the rights and liberties of their neutral flag, have learned with the highest satisfaction, that her majesty, the empress of all the Russias, constantly animated with noble and generous sentiments, which must transmit to the latest posterity the immortal lustre and renown of her glorious reign, has thought fit to declare to the belligerent powers, "That being in the intention to observe, during the present war, the most exact impartiality, she is determined to maintain, by all the means the most efficacious, the honor of the Russian flag, as well as the safety of the commerce and the navigation of her subjects, and not to suffer any of the belligerent powers to give them any interruption. "The sentiments and views of their high mightinesses answer perfectly, and are entirely conformable to the principles which make the basis of the declaration of her imperial majesty; and they consequently do not hesitate to lay open, after her example to the belligerent powers, the same principles which they are determined to follow, and to maintain in concert with her imperial majesty—to wit :

1. That neutral vessels may freely navigate from port to port, and upon the coasts of the powers at war.

2. That the effects, belonging to subjects of the powers at war, shall be free upon neutral vessels, excepting only merchandizes of contraband.

3. That, with regard to contraband, their high mightinesses adhere to what is stipulated by the treaties concluded between them and the belligerent powers; and more expressly by the sixth article of the treaty of marine, with the crown of Spain, of the 17th of December, 1650; the third article of the treaty of marine with the crown of England of the first of December, 1674; and the 16th article of the treaty of commerce and navigation, and of marine with the crown of France, of the first of December, 1739, for twenty-five years; the dispositions and determinations, of which treaties in their full extent, relative to merchandizes of contraband, their high mightinesses consider as entirely founded in natural equity and the law of nations.

4. That no place shall be adjudged blockaded, but when ships of war stationed in the neighborhood shall hinder, that no vessel can enter without an evident danger.

5. That these principles shall serve as rules to judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of prizes.

As these principles form and constitute the universal rights of neutral powers; and as they are moreover confirmed by treaties which can never be lawfully annulled or altered, or suspended by a common act and reciprocal consent of the contracting parties, their high mightinesses flatter themselves, that the belligerent powers will acknowledge and respect the justice of them, by giving no obstruction to the commerce of the subjects of their high mightinesses, and by not troubling them, in the free enjoyment of rights, the propriety of which cannot be contested to the flag of neutral and independent power.

January 15, 1781, wrote to congress. "Zealand is still endeavoring to divert the republic from its interest and its duty; to embarrass its operations, and involve it in disgrace and ruin.

The directors of the company of commerce, that of insurance, and a great number of merchants, established at Middleburg in Zealand, have presented a petition to the states general, to supplicate their high mightinesses, to try again the way of negociation; to endeavor to prevent by this means the damages with which the subjects of the republic are still threatened by a war with England; and to come to a friendly accommodation. This petition has been supported by a resolution of the states of Zealand, transmitted to the assembly of the states general: but it is said, that this petition has been rendered commissorial, and will not be taken into consideration, unless the English should make some propositions of peace.

The state of the marine of this republic, during the year 1781, as it has been proposed by the petition of the council of state, is of two vessels of 70 guns, and 550 men; nine of 60 guns and 450 men; fifteen of 50 guns and 300 men; two of 40 guns and 270 men; one of 40 guns and 230 men; fourteen of 36 guns and 230 men; thirteen of 20 guns and 150 men; five sloops; one hospital ship; four packet boats; twelve large armed vessels; sixteen smaller; making in the whole ninety four ships and 18,490 men."

January 15, 1781, wrote again to congress. "Congress will not expect me to write of peace at this time, when the flames of war are spreading far and wide with more rapidity than ever: and I have no comfortable tidings on the subject of money. In the first place I believe there is not so much money here as the world imagines; and in the next place those who have what there is, have now no confidence in any nation or individual. All credit seems at a stand. The republic will want a loan; the northern neutral powers will want loans; and even a loan will be wanted to support the credit of a number of houses in the mercantile way which are affected by the violent and sudden revolution of the times, and by the piratical depredations of the English. I hope therefore, that congress will not venture to draw here, until they have certain information that they may draw with safety."

Amsterdam, January 16, 1781, wrote to the board of war of the Massachusetts. "There are three persons in the mercantile way, Mr. Sigourney, Mr. Ingraham, and Mr. Bromfield, who are now in this city, and propose to reside and establish a mercantile house here. These gentlemen are very well known in the Massachusetts and therefore it is unnecessary for me to say any thing concerning their characters. They have travelled a good deal in Europe, and I believe have been constantly in pursuit of business and useful information in the commercial line. Their design of residing here, as it is well approved, may be very useful both to this country and to ours, by facilitating a communication and commerce advantageous to both. Perhaps they may execute any commission from the honorable board more to their satisfaction than a stranger. I cannot therefore, especially as these are the first who have conceived such a design here, but recommend them to the favorable attention of the board."

Amsterdam, January 18, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dana, at Paris. "Yesterday I had the pleasure of your's of the 7th. Both the packets came safe, and in good order. As to "a secret address," you may direct, under cover, A Madame La Veuve du Monsier Henry Schorn, op de Agterburgwall by de Hoogstraat Amsterdam.

It is not possible to suppress all suspicions after the conversation you heard; but your own coolness and judgment will be sufficient without any hint from me, to be cautious of mentioning those suspicions, until evidence shall appear.

The newspapers, for a year from the time of subscription, which was in the spring, are all paid for. It is not worth while to subscribe anew, for the Gazette de France, nor for more than one foreign Gazette. As I take the English papers here at a most horrid expense, I wish you would pay Mr. Genet, and let me know the amount. My most cordial respects to that gentleman, for whom I have the highest esteem. I think you may depend on his friendship and sincerity. My respects also to Dr.

Folke, and thanks for the newspapers. I have conceived a great esteem for that young gentleman. Mr. Edwards is gone to France. I shall get published the contents of his newspapers.

This nation can hardly yet believe that the English are, or will be, at war with them : instead of depending upon themselves, they now look up to Russia and the northern powers : if these should fail them, which I think, however, they cannot, I know not what would be the consequence. But I shall never get a single ducat, until it is decided whether the neutral union will support the republic. Every party and almost every man is afraid to do the least thing, of which England can complain, or about which she can make a noise, lest the blame of involving the country in war should be thrown upon them. What I shall do, I know not. Congress draws upon me ; but I shall have no resource to pay a farthing but from Dr. Franklin. If that fails me, I am undone. I wish our countrymen would assume courage enough to augment the taxes upon themselves, and reduce the needless expenses, so as to do without succors which are unattainable. At least, I think nothing will ever be done here, until a treaty is concluded between the two republics. There are a million jealousies about the Scheld ; about trade with the emperor's dominions ; about the succession of the empire ; or rather about another election in the house of Austria, &c. &c. &c. Individuals dare nothing in this country, nor indeed in any other part of Europe, until the countenance of government is given. A treaty with this country is so great a work, that it would require time, and this is said not to be the proper time to talk about it."

I have transcribed this letter to Mr. Dana at full length, for several reasons.

1. For the sake of explaining a very frivolous circumstance which has been dignified by an insertion and misrepresentation in history, I mean my first private lodgings after I left the city hotel, in Amsterdam.



On my journey from Paris to Nantz, in order to embark for America in the frigate alliance, in the spring of 1779, I met upon the road a gentleman in a post chaise, whose dress, air and countenance indicated an American: He stopped his own postillion and mine, and stepping out of his carriage, asked me, very politely apologising for his freedom, whether my name was Adams? Upon my answer in the affirmative, he said he was very glad to see me, though he was very sorry I was leaving Paris, for he had letters for me, and had depended very much upon me for assistance in his enterprize. He produced me several letters, particularly one from Mr. Edward Rutledge, and another from Mr. Arthur Middleton, of South Carolina. I had served in congress, for years, with both these gentlemen: the former had been with Dr. Franklin and me, to meet lord Howe, in 1776, on Staten Island, and was afterwards governor of South Carolina: the latter was the son of Mr. Middleton, whom we chose for president of congress, in 1774, after president Randolph retired to his chair of speaker of the house of burgeses in Virginia. Both these gentlemen were among the most respectable characters in the state of South Carolina, and both in their letters recommended commodore Gillon to me, in the warmest terms, as a gentleman of talents and address, in whom they had the most perfect confidence, and requesting me to assist him with my advice and countenance in his business, which they explained to me to be to purchase and equip a fleet of frigates for the state of South Carolina. When I returned to Paris, in 1780, the commodore came often to visit me, but returned to Holland some months before I made my journey to that country. When I arrived at Amsterdam, I went to the hotel de Ville, the city tavern, and there resided some time; but finding it the resort of all nations and languages, and among the rest, of many Englishmen, I wrote to commodore Gillon, who knew the city, to procure me convenient apartments in some respectable private house, where I might be more removed from the observation of spies. Gillon consulted his friends, and particularly bur-

gomaster Hooft, the most respectable friend of America in the city, who advised him to the house of Madame Schorn, a relation of the burgomaster, represented as a worthy but unfortunate woman, of sixty or seventy years of age. Gillon was pleased with this, because the house was next door to his own lodgings, and he wished to have me near him as much as I wished to have him near me, that I might avail myself of his society, which was very agreeable, and especially of his knowledge of the language, the people, the city, and the country. I found my apartments decent and convenient for my little family, which consisted of myself, my two little sons, and a single servant. My accommodations were very good, my table well served, and we were treated by all the family with great respect and attention. I was visited there by burgomaster Hooft, Mr. Van Berckel, Mr. Visser, another pensionary, the Messrs. Crommelines, the Van Stapherts, Mr. De Neufville, Mr. Bicker, Mr. Hodgshon, and many others of the wealthiest and most respectable people of the place. I understood the lady to be a widow, and it was a long time before I learned that she had a husband, who had been a merchant in good business and credit, but had failed, and became intemperate. He had, however, some employment which kept him from home, except in the night, so that I never saw him. He fell sick, was brought home, and died in a few days, and was buried, without my ever seeing him. It was but a very little time before I left these lodgings that I ever heard a whisper of any objection to them. Then I was told that there were some remarks among the Dutch, and some whisperings among the Americans in town, that Mr. Adams was in too obscure lodgings. As I had reason to believe that this notion had been put into circulation by the English spies, I cared not for their nonsensical tittle tattle, and would not quit my quarters till some time afterwards, I removed to Leyden for the sake of the education of my children.

2. For the sake of explaining the character of Mr. Genet. This gentleman was premier commis in the office of interpreters, under the count de Vergennes, or in

English phrase, an under secretary of state in the office of foreign affairs. He spoke the English language with great propriety and facility; was a man of letters, and an excellent writer; a zealous advocate for America, and very friendly to all Americans. He conducted the *Mercure de France*, in which he published many little speculations for me; and indeed himself and his whole family were always very civil and friendly to me. He was the father to Mr. Genet, the minister plenipotentiary from the French republic to the United States, who has been so much celebrated in this country, has married into one of our most illustrious families, and still resides here.

January 18, 1781, wrote to Dr. Franklin. "I am much obliged to you for the news; but as I think with you, there are circumstances in it which are very suspicious, I shall not dare to make use of it. There is, however, authentic intelligence which is very comfortable. I take the handbill, &c. to be sheer fabrication, for the purpose of frightening Clinton, Cornwallis and Leslie. I am sorry that our countrymen imitate their enemies in this dirty trick of lying. It is ever considered as a proof of weakness, and never answers a good end. In this instance indeed, it might do good, if it should give a hint to our allies to adopt such a measure.

The states general resolved, last Friday, to grant letters of marque, and yesterday they were given out. The manifesto waits for the courier from Petersburg. The Dutch look up to Russia, or rather to the neutral union, more than they ought; for though I hope they will be supported by the maritime powers, yet they are able, and I wish they were willing to depend more upon themselves. When shall we see the unravelling of this great plot? It will be a spectacle indeed, if nine or ten nations should be at war at once, with one. At present I do not see how it can be avoided. The English have been so decided, as usual, and have committed the dignity of the crown, and the pride of the nation, so far, that I do not see how they can *restrain*, and the neutral confederacy are on the other

hand so far pledged, that there is no retreat. If the power of Great Britain can rise superior to all this, her pretended omnipotence will no longer be thought an hyperbole."

January 18, 1781, wrote to Mr. Arnold Henry Dohrman, at Lisbon. "I have the honor to transmit you a letter from the honorable the committee of congress for foreign affairs, with a resolution of congress of the 21st of June last, appointing you agent for the United States of America, in the kingdom of Portugal, for the transaction of such affairs of the United States as may be committed to your direction. As, by the misfortunes of Mr. Laurens, I am at present fixed in this place, I shall be particularly happy in your correspondence."

JOHN ADAMS.

*Quincy, September 16, 1809.*

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#### LETTER XLIV.

JANUARY 18, 1781, wrote to Mr. Mazzei, at Florence. "Yesterday I received your's, of the 19th of October. Some time since, I received the other, of the 19th of August : both went to Paris, and I being here, Mr. Dana and Mr. Thaxter forwarded their enclosures to America, according to my desire, but I am not able to say in what vessel. In consequence of Mr. Laurens' calamity, I am ordered to reside in Holland for the present, and should be glad to be informed by you, whether it is probable that any money might be borrowed in Italy for the United States, by the authority of congress. Your letter to governor Jefferson, I sent with my dispatches in the time of it, but I am not able to say by what vessel. The English are in a fair way to have enemies enough. They do not love their enemies like good christians : but they love to have enemies, and I think their passion will be abundantly gratified. The Dutch are already added to the French, Spaniards and Americans ; and it is likely that the Russians, Swedes and Danes, will soon increase

the list. Will the English make a great figure in the contest?"

Amsterdam, January 18, 1781, wrote to congress. "At length, one act has appeared which looks like war. The following placard was resolved on, the 12th of the month.

The states general of the United Provinces of the low countries, to all those who shall see, or hear read, these presents, greeting. Know ye, that the king of Great Britain having thought proper, without any lawful cause, to attack in an hostile manner this republic; and as we are obliged to neglect nothing which can serve for our defence, and to use at the same time the right, the example of which, the conduct of the said crown has commenced by setting us, and to act against it in the same manner as they act against us, and consequently to do to the said king, and to his subjects, all the prejudice which shall be in our power: for these causes, and for the protection of the commerce and of the navigation of this country, we have thought fit to establish and to permit to all the subjects of this state, who shall take or destroy, any English vessels of war or privateers, the following rewards.

Article 1. All those who shall fit out a privateer, and shall have obtained of his highness the prince of Orange and Nassau, in quality of admiral general of these countries, suitable commissions, after having given before hand, the requisite securities, shall not be held to furnish the third man of their crew, as it is ordained by the placards of their high mightinesses, of the 26th of June, 1780; excepting those who will load with merchandizes, and take at the same time the said letters of marque. Those who shall have taken and conducted into one of the ports or roads, within the jurisdiction of one of the colleges of admiralty of this country, a vessel of war or privateer of the king of Great Britain, shall draw moreover a bounty of 150 florins for each man who shall be found at the commencement of the combat, on board of the said vessel of war or privateer; as also a like sum for each pound of ball, which the artillery which shall be found on board

the said vessel, at the time aforesaid, can discharge at one time, not including the swivels or the balls of the new artillery, called carronades, valued only at one quarter of their weight. In such sort, that if one of our privateers shall make herself master of an English vessel of war or privateer, mounted, for example, with forty pieces of cannon, carrying altogether 350 pounds weight of ball, that is to say, forty carronades and 1400 balls of eight pounds, and the crew of which shall be 220 men, shall receive for bounty or reward, by calculating each man and each pound of ball, upon the footing of 150 florins, the sum of 85,800 florins, and thus more or less in proportion to the crew and the calibre of the cannon which shall be found at the time of the combat, upon the English ship, besides the booty and the prize, and all the effects which shall be found on board, without any other deduction to be made from it, than the tenth for the admiral.

2. The said recompences assigned for prizes, shall also take place in case the English vessel of war or privateer shall be totally destroyed : whether our armed vessel shall have sunk her, or burnt her, or shipwrecked her, or whether the said vessel shall have perished in any other manner, after having been taken. Provided, nevertheless, that this recompence is not to be claimed in the whole, at least, if the crew of the vessel destroyed has not been taken or killed. And if it should happen that they have only driven the enemy's vessel on shore, so that the vessel has perished, but the crew has saved itself, our letters of marque shall not enjoy, in this case, but one half of the bounty or reward promised ; so that in the case last mentioned, they shall receive only 48,900 florins, instead of 85,800.

3. Provided nevertheless,, that neither the prize nor the bounty, shall ever be adjudged to any of our letters of marque, until after the affair shall have been carried before one of the colleges of the admiralty of this country, and the sentence shall have been there pronounced in her favor.

4. The said colleges of the admiralty may not adjudge these rewards until after the captain, lieutenant, and pilot of the privateer, as well as those who shall have freighted her, their book-keepers, and others authorised, shall have declared by a solemn oath, that the vessel of war or privateer of which they have made themselves masters, has been duly taken, without any collusion, directly or indirectly, with the English, or with any other known to them. In case the freighters who claim the adjudication of prizes and bounties, are out of the country, absent, or hindered by some other obstacle, it shall suffice that the book-keeper, or some other authorised, take the oath but so far as it is of his knowledge for himself and his freighters, conformably to the special procuration which he shall have for this effect. The freighters, nevertheless, shall be obliged to take an oath before hand, before the magistrate of their residence, or before other persons competent, whose testimonies they shall send.

5. And for the better encouragement of the said ships which shall have armed as privateers, we ordain that those who shall have been wounded in a combat with an English, shall be maintained at the expense of the state, without its costing any thing to the proprietors of the privateer, or those who shall be on board. We ordain also, that those who shall be maimed in fighting an English ship, shall be gratified on the part of the state, and without its costing any thing to the freighters, with the moiety of the recompence granted by the republic to those who serve on board vessels of war : they shall not, however, have a right but to those rewards which are given once, and not to those which shall be granted weekly or monthly, or otherwise. As to what respects the maintenance of the wounded, the account of it shall be presented to the competent college of the admiralty, to be there examined, and duly regulated : so that the maimed, to the end that they may enjoy the moiety of the recompence proposed, may procure themselves an act of the said college of the admiralty, after having furnished it with the necessary proofs.

6. For the encouragement of the ships of war, 'as well as the merchant vessels which may be provided with commissions, to make use of in case of need, to cause to the English ships all the prejudice possible, we intend that the English ship, of which they may make themselves masters, of what nature or denomination soever it may be, shall be given them entire, the tenth for the admiral excepted, without pretending, however, to any other recompence.

7. If it should happen, that our privateers, merchant vessels, or others, armed for a cruise, at the expense of individuals of this country, shall retake any vessels or effects belonging to the subjects of the state, and that such re-capture shall be made in the space of twice twenty four hours after they shall have been in the hands of the enemy, they shall enjoy in that case one fifth of the just value of the vessels or effects which they shall have delivered ; but if the re-capture shall be made in the space of four times twenty four hours after the vessel shall have been in the hands of the English, they shall then have one third of said value ; and if the re-capture shall be made after four times twenty four hours, they shall have the moiety of it, without having any further regard to the greater or lesser time, that the said vessels or effects retaken, shall have been in the hands of the English, after the expiration of the four times twenty four hours.

8. The adjudication of any one of the said recompences, as well as the acts of the respective colleges of the admiralty, in favor of the maimed or wounded, being shewn to the receiver general of the duties of entry and clearance, to receive the appointed recompence, the payment of it shall be promptly made by the said receiver general at the Hague, or in the place of the college of admiralty in which the sentence or the taxation shall have been pronounced, as it shall be most convenient for the said receiver general.

9. Which receiver general shall be provided with sufficient sums of money to satisfy the said payments, and he shall always take care, that after having paid some



bounties, he has always wherewith to satisfy, promptly, those which may be demanded of him in the sequel; either by the second moiety of the duties of Last and Veilgeld, or by negotiating successively the sums which he shall have occasion for as a supply.

10. In all cases, the privateer who shall have taken or destroyed any English vessel, ought to take care to give, without delay, and as soon as he arrives, notice to the said receiver general of the value of the bounties which he has a right to claim; to the end that the said receiver general may be in a condition to make prompt payment.

11. And in all the respective colleges of admiralty where the case shall be brought, they shall take care to render prompt sentences; even by postponing to other times, the affairs that may be before them.

12. And in case an appeal or revision should be demanded, and by this means the sentences of the said colleges shall be annulled; we have desired, that in this case, the recompences assigned by the sentences of the admiralty should be delivered to the said privateers; so that the demand of revision may not suspend or hinder the payment; we mean, at the same time, that the sureties which the ships going to cruise ought to furnish, shall be obliged in that case to augment the surety, and to promise a prompt restitution of what shall have been paid to the said privateers, in consequence of sentences of the admiralty, in case that those sentences shall be reversed in the revision, and the privateers denied their demand. And to be the more sure that the sums delivered in such cases, be restored, we have declared, and do declare by these presents, that the vessels, and all that belongs to them, with which the prizes shall have been made, shall be held juridically to make restitution of the bounties received; and that the said juridical obligation shall commence from the day that the said privateers shall have received their commissions, and shall go upon a cruise.

13. And this placard shall have its effect from the day of this publication, and that nobody may pretend ignorance, we request and demand the lords, the states, the

stadtholder, the counsellors, committees, and the deputies of the states of the respective provinces of Guilderland, and the earldom of Zutphen, of Holland and West Friesland, of Zealand, of Utrecht, of Friesland, of Overyfell, and of Groninghen, and Ommelandes, and all other members and officers of justice, that they announce, publish, and post up this ordinance immediately, in all the places of this country where it is customary to make such annunciations, publications and postings : We charge and enjoin, moreover, the counsellors of the admiralty, the advocates of the treasury, secretaries general of convoys and licences, receivers, masters of convoys, controulers and searchers, and at the same time the receiver general of the augmentation of the duty of Last and Veilgeld, and all others to whom it belongs, to govern themselves exactly according to the tenor of these presents.

Their high-mightinesses have also published the following.

The states general of the United Provinces to all those who shall see, or hear read, these presents, greeting. We make known, that to the end to encourage the loyal inhabitants of this state, we have thought proper, by the present publication, to notify to all and every one, and to assure them, that all those who employed in the service of the republic, in the war at sea, may be maimed in such a manner as to become incapable of gaining their livelihood by labor, and shall desire to be assisted by a sum of money payable once for all, shall receive in proportion to the importance of their wounds, that which follows :

1. For the loss of two eyes 1500 florins ; for the loss of one eye 350 florins. As to other accidents which may happen under the case mentioned, gratifications shall be given according to the good pleasure of the respective colleges of the admiralty.

2. For the loss of two arms 1500 florins ; for the loss of the right arm 450 florins ; for that of the left arm 350 florins. And for other accidents and wounds in these members, at the discretion of the colleges of the admiralty; upon which each one depends.

3. For the loss of two hands 1200 florins ; for the loss of a right hand 350 florins ; for that of the left hand 300 florins. As to lesser accidents, valuable at sums less considerable, at the discretion aforementioned.

4. For the loss of two legs 700 florins ; for the loss of one leg 350. For accidents less serious, the gratification shall be fixed by the colleges of the admiralty.

5. For the loss of two feet 450 florins ; for that of one foot 200 florins, and for smaller wounds at the discretion of the respective colleges.

Moreover, all those who in the service of the republic shall be maimed to such a degree as to be no longer able to gain a living by labor, nor to provide in any manner for their subsistence, shall receive during their lives, one ducat on a week, and all other wounds or mutilations less considerable shall be paid in proportion.

Amsterdam, January 21, 1781, wrote to Mr. Luzac. "I have received your favor of the 19th, and am much obliged to you for your frank and candid account of the paragraphs mentioned.

I could not wish to diminish the utmost freedom of speculation on American affairs, and especially of your observations and reflections which are generally made with a great deal of knowledge of the subject, and upon honest and amiable principles. But in this case I hope your conjectures will prove to be mistaken. Georgia is so connected with South Carolina that it is impossible ever to give it up : and Vermont is so situated that the southern states will with difficulty agree that it should be distinct, on account of the balance of votes. I do not know that it is the secret wish of the New-England states that Vermont should be distinct. I rather think otherwise. Perhaps it would be better both for Vermont and all the states, if the inhabitants of it would consent to be divided between New-York, New-Hampshire, and Massachusetts, or come altogether under any one of them. How, I do not mean to enter into a discussion of the question, for which I might perhaps be justly censured. I am glad to

find that those ideas were not held up to the public, by any one, who meant to do mischief, or to carry any point."

JOHN ADAMS.

*Quincy, September 19, 1809.*

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LETTER XLV.

ALL the gentlemen in Holland who were the most friendly to the American cause; were excessively prone to have their spirits cast down into deep despondency, and absolute despair of our final success by any sudden news of unfortunate events: In one of these dispositions, the baron Vander Capellen wrote me a letter full of these causes of his own and others' anxiety, to which I wrote him the following hasty answer.

Amsterdam, January 21, 1781, wrote to the baron Vander Capellen de Poll. "I have not been able to find an opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of the esteemed favor with which you honored me, on the 24th of December, till now.

I think it is very probable that the several causes you have enumerated co-operate to lessen the credit of the United States; but I think, at the same time, that it is because the facts are misrepresented and exaggerated by the friends of England. Let us consider them for a few moments, one by one.

"The invasion of Georgia and of South Carolina" is the first. But why should the invasion of these two states affect the credit of the thirteen states, more than the invasion of any two others? Massachusetts and Rhode Island have been invaded by armies much more formidable. New-York, Connecticut, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, have all been invaded before: but what has been the consequence? Not conquest; nor submission. On the contrary, all these states have not only learned the art of war, and the habits of submission to military discipline, but have got themselves well armed, nay, clothed and furnished with a great deal

of hard money, by these very invasions. And what is more than all the rest, they have got over the fears and terrors that are always excited by a first invasion, and are a worse enemy than the English. And, moreover, they have had such experience of the tyranny and cruelty of the enemy as has made them more resolute than ever, against the English government. Now why should not the invasion of Georgia and Carolina have the same effects? It is very certain, in the opinion of the Americans themselves, that it will. Besides, the unexampled cruelty of Cornwallis has been enough to revolt, even Negroes. It has been such as will make the English, objects of greater horror there, than in any other of the states.

“The capture of Charleston” is the second. But why should the capture of Charleston have a greater effect than that of Boston or Philadelphia? The latter of which was of vastly more importance to the common cause than Charleston.

“The loss of the continental frigates.” But why were these four or five frigates of so much more importance than several times that number that we had lost before. We lost several frigates with Philadelphia, and shipping to a much greater value than at Charleston. We lost frigates with New-York: but above all, we lost at Penobscot armed vessels to five times a greater amount than at Charleston. Yet all those losses have been suddenly repaired; insomuch that our armed vessels, in the course of the last summer, have taken more prizes than they ever did before by half. They did more damage to the English than the whole maritime power of France and Spain have done from the beginning of the war. We can afford to lose a great many frigates, because they cost us nothing. I am assured, that, by an accurate calculation from the public accounts, the prizes taken by the continental navy have amounted to a large sum more than the whole amount expended in building, equipping, manning, victualling and paying the ships and men, from the beginning of the war.

“The defeat of Gates.” But why should this defeat discourage America, or weaken her credit in Europe, more than the defeat on Long Island? The loss of Fort Washington? The defeat at Brandywine? At Germantown? The loss of Canada? Ticonderoga, &c.? much greater defeats and more deplorable losses?

“The inaction of the combined fleets of De Guichen and Solano.” But if we consider that the Spaniards got their fleet and army and artillery safe to America, to put their dominions there in a state of safety; that the French have convoyed home, in safety, their merchant fleets; that De Guichen fought Rodney twice or three times, on equal terms, and the English gained no advantage; that the French fleet is now at Brest, under D’Estaing, to keep the English in awe; perhaps it is better for the common cause than if they had put more to hazard.

“The decided superiority of the English in the islands.” But if we consider the French and Spanish ships that are still in the West Indies, and the disabled condition of the English fleet, their want of men, and especially the weakness of their garrisons in their islands, and the strength of the French and Spanish garrisons, we are sure that the English are not in a condition to attempt any thing against them.

“The superiority of the English at New-York”—is but just sufficient to prevent their enemies from destroying them.

“The defection of Arnold,” will be considered by every man who contemplates all the circumstances that attended it, as a proof of the weakness of the English, and the decisive strength and confidence of the Americans.—When we consider the crimes he had committed, and the unpopularity into which he had justly fallen: When we consider that an officer of his high rank, long services, and brilliant reputation, was not able to carry over with him a single officer or soldier, nor even his own valet, nor his wife, nor his child: When we consider the universal execration in which his treason was held by the whole army, and the whole continent: When we con-

sider the firmness and dignity with which Andre was punished, we must conclude that the American army and people stand strong ; as strong against the arts and bribes as the arms and valor of their enemies.

“ The discontent of the army.” There never was an army without anxiety and a constant agitation of hopes and fears. When the officers think their pay is not enough, what can they do but represent it to the government for redress ? This has certainly been done. But what are the discontents in the British army and navy ? Much greater, I assure you, than in the American service.

“ The jealousy between the army and the body politic,” is not to be dreaded. It only shews that the spirit of liberty is still alive and active in the people. The baron Vander Capellen, I am sure, will applaud the people for keeping a watchful eye over the army, to see that it may not ravish from them that liberty for which all have been contending.

“ Mr. Necker” seems to stand upon firm ground ; and “ the changes in the French ministry” probably have been for the better. But it is scarcely possible to believe that any change in the French ministry should do any considerable injury to the common cause. The changes already made were because enough was not done. The importance of France, nay, her existence as a maritime and commercial power, are so much at stake in this business, that it is impossible she should forsake the cause.

“ The depreciation of the paper money” is the most difficult to be answered, because it is the most difficult to explain to a gentleman who has not been in the country and seen its operation. This depreciation has been a real advantage, because it is a tax upon the people paid as it advances, and therefore prevents the public from being found in debt. It is true, it is an unequal tax, and therefore causes what your friend governor Livingston justly calls “ perplexity” ; but by no means weakens or disables the people from carrying on the war. The body of the people lose nothing by it. The merchant, the farmer, the tradesman, the laborer, loses nothing by it. They

are the monied men, the capitalists, those who have money at interest, those who live upon fixed salaries, that is, the officers of government, who lose by it, and who have borne this tax. This, you see, is an ease and relief to the people at large. The consequence of this depreciation has been, that, while England has increased her national debt sixty millions by this war, ours is not a tenth part of it, not six millions. Who then can hold out longest? This depreciation has no tendency to make the people submit to Great Britain; because that submission would not relieve, but increase the perplexity. For submission would not procure us peace. We must raise men and money to fight France, Spain, Holland, Russia, Sweden and Denmark. The congress, instead of attempting to redeem the paper money, by hard cash, has ordered it all in, at the depreciated value, and this measure is adopted by the states without any difficulty, which is the only method of justice or policy.

Nobody need fear that the English will "seize the moments when our army shall be feeble for want of pay." There have been several moments when our army has been reduced to almost nothing, not from want of pay, but from the expiration of their periods of enlistment. These moments the English seized before they had sent half their army to the West India islands. But what was the consequence? When our army was reduced to a few hundreds, and theirs more than double what it is now, they marched through the Jerseys. And what was the consequence? Their post at Trenton was attacked and taken: another body of their troops were attacked and defeated at Princeton, and general Washington took post at Morriston, in their rear, and they dared not move another step the whole winter. The affairs at Trenton, Bennington, and lately on the summit of King's mountain, prove beyond reply, that if our army is reduced ever so low, and theirs extend themselves ever so far, their necessary advanced posts are in our power: in the power even of an handful of the militia. No, sir! Their power



to hurt us lies more in keeping hid in a fortified sea port town, than by marching into the country.

As to “a total failure of specie,” we are in no danger of it. The English are furnishing us with silver and gold every day. What is become of all the millions they have sent to America, during this war? What; of all the cash that France sends to pay and subsist their fleet and army? The truth is, that silver and gold now circulate freely in America, and there are larger quantities of both, than any body in Europe imagines.

As to “the danger of the people’s submitting, from indigence,” that danger, if any such there ever was, is past, in 1776 and 1777. The people suffered very much, and the army too, for want of salt, sugar, rum and cloathing. But at this day, their trade is so far extended, they make such numbers of prizes, and have introduced and established so many necessary manufactures, that they have a plentiful supply. We have been more distressed for want of salt and powder than any thing else. But there is now an abundance of both, manufactured in the country, and imported too.

As to “the ability of America to pay,” it depends upon a few words. America has between three and four millions of people; England and Scotland have between five and six. The lands in America produce as much as any other lands. The exports of America, in 1774, were six millions. The exports of Great Britain, in 1774, were twelve millions, including too a great part of the commodities of the growth of America. England is two hundred millions in debt. America six millions. England has spent sixty millions in this war: America six. Which people then are the ablest to pay? Yet England has credit: America not. Is this from reasoning, or from prejudice?

The numbers of people, their industry; the quantity and fertility of their lands, and the value of their exports, are the best rules and the only rules I know to judge of the ability of a people to pay taxes and debts. In all these respects American credit will bear the most rigorous

examination. The country that lends them money, will get the most by it. Their principal and interest will be safe ; and what is more the money will be laid out among them in the purchase of cloathing and supplies, so that the trade will be promoted by it.

When England and every other nation of Europe is obliged to borrow money every year to carry on war : England to the amount of her whole annual exports ; it is not to be wondered, that America has occasion to borrow, a sum after six years of war, equal to a twelfth or a twenty-fourth part of her annual exports. With such a loan we could carry on the war more at our ease ; our poor soldiers would be more warm and comfortable ; but if we cannot obtain it, we shall not have it to pay ; and I am positively certain we can carry on the war without a loan longer than Great Britain can with all their loans.

You may depend upon it, sir, I shall be “cautious,” and maintain the most sacred regard to truth in my representations to congress. But I dare not deceive them with false hopes. No man living has more at heart than I have, a friendly and lasting connection between the two republics. The religion, the government and the commerce of the two countries point out such a connection. Old prejudices and habits of veneration for Holland in the minds of all Americans who have ever considered the Dutch as their friends and allies make the Americans wish for such a connection. For it should be remembered that we have been as long in alliance and friendship with this country as England, and have as good a right for any thing I know to the benefit of the treaties as the English. And therefore if the truth will not warrant me in representing to congress so much zeal and warmth in this nation for a connection with America as I could wish ; it will not be my fault, but my misfortune and my grief.

January 25, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dumas, at the Hague. “I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of the 15th and 24th, the latter enclosing a letter to congress, which I will do myself the honor to enclose with my first

dispatches. This method will be very agreeable to me, if you choofe to continue it.

There are bruits here of a 74 gun ship, with six home-ward bound East Indiamen, taken from the English, by some French men of war, near the Cape of Good Hope. The report comes from Lisbon ; but merits confirmation.

I do not yet see or hear any thing of the manifesto ; nor about another thing, which gives me more anxiety than any other, I mean the determination of the court of justice of Holland, upon the conduct of Amsterdam. I have fixed my attention on that court of justice, because the full justification of the regency of Amsterdam ought to be inserted in the manifesto. The British manifesto cannot be answered without it. The world will never think the republic in earnest, until this is done. Keeping it in suspense is considered as a design to keep open a passage for retreat. It is treating Notre Ami (Van Berckel) with great indignity, and in some measure depriving the public of his counsel and assistance, at a time when it is most wanted. It is suffering the spirit of the people to subside, and their passions to cool, a matter of the last importance in war. "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the ebb, leads on to fortune."—However, the maxims of government here are different from most other countries ; and the nation itself, and its rulers, must be the best judges of its interest, duty and policy.

Some minds have an habit of looking forward and guessing what future events will be the consequence of those that are passed : and though we are very short sighted, we can sometimes reason upon sure principles, and conjecture with some degree of certainty. Upon this plan then what will be the conduct of the neutral union ? And what that of England ? Must not the neutral confederacy demand restitution of all the Dutch ships, upon pain of war ? And England must, unless she departs from every maxim that has governed her, not only throughout this reign, but several others before it ; unless she departs from the character of the nation too, as

well as the maxims of the court, refuse to restore the Dutch ships. The consequence, to all appearance, must be Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, France, Spain and America, all at war against England at once. A rare and curious phenomenon to be sure ! But what will be the effect of this ? Peace ? By no means. The neutral confederacy moving slowly, and unused to war at sea, will depend upon England's giving up, and will not exert themselves. England, whose navy has lived among flying balls for some time, will be alert and active, and do a great deal of mischief before her enemies are properly aroused. I think, in the end, they will be aroused, and the consequence of it will be that England will run a chance so be ruined, and undergo a terrible convulsion. Say, are these reveries wholly chimerical ?

You are sensible that our country, America, has two objects in view ; one is a treaty of commerce, at least with this republic ; the other is a loan of money. You will be so good as to keep these points always in sight, and inform me if you discover any disposition towards both, or either, in persons capable of effecting them, or putting things in a train for that purpose. The court is supposed to be decided against America. But is that certain ? It has had an inclination towards England, but having got over that, why should it be against America ? I am persuaded that nothing can be done without the court.

Do you think it would be prudent in me to endeavor to get introduced to one or more persons in power ; the Grand Pensionary of Holland ; or any of the members of the States General ? in order to have some conversation upon American affairs ? Do you suppose I should succeed, if I were to attempt to obtain such a conference ? If it is the interest of the two republics to connect themselves together, as you and I believe it to be, it would not be amiss to have those interests mutually and candidly explained ; and objections, if there are any, considered and obviated.

January 31, 1781, wrote to Mr. Jennings, at Brussels. "Your favor of the 24th is received. I wish that Madrid would put an end to Hufsey's and Cumberland's masquerades. They do no good, if they do no harm.

I think it is pretty certain, that the English ministry are seeking a connection with the emperor of Germany: but as there is nothing to be gotten by a connection with them, but broken bones, if he has as much sense as he is reputed to have, he will rather choose to sleep in a whole skin.

The duke of Brunswick Wolfembutte is not at Lillo, but at the Hague. Your reasoning to shew the policy, the justice and the necessity of acknowledging American independence is conclusive to all the maritime powers; and it is probable they are sensible of it. But whoever does it, must have war with England, and this idea startles them all. They choose to arrange matters in such a system, that all may go to war at once, if any is obliged to do so. And this takes time. But if the armed neutrality were all at war against England, the question is, whether they would all acknowledge American independence? To be sure, they all mean it: it is their interest: and it is a part of their system. But such is the caution, the timidity, and the sloth, that I expect they would put it off. They would say, we will treat you like friends. But it is time enough. We know not what may happen. Wait for the general conferences of pacification. Then we will take your affair into consideration. I think, however, that congress should send a minister to each of the maritime courts; or at least one, authorized to treat with all of them. Whether they will or not, I cannot say. I fear they will be much divided about their foreign affairs.

By the treaty, France has agreed to join America, in proposing to other powers, to acknowledge our independence. If congress, or any minister of congress properly authorized, were to propose this to France, she could not, and would not, refuse it. Why it has not been done, I know not. The unfortunate division (in congress) about foreign affairs, will account for many things. I hope,

however, that something or other will turn up to make them more unanimous. If Mr. Lee and Mr. Izzard do not find the majority of their opinion in one point, their information may produce greater unanimity in many others.

Have you read *La Vie privée de Louis XV.*? It is just published here, in four volumes. I have devoured it with the utmost greediness. History, romance, or libel, it is very entertaining and instructive. It is the greatest compliment to America that ever was written. When we see the distress, the ruin, the humiliation and debasement of the French nation and monarchy, up to the very moment when America was severed from Great Britain, and began to cultivate a good understanding with France; when we see that, from the same moment, France began to revive; and has been increasing in reputation, wealth, commerce and power ever since; and her flourishing and prosperous condition at this day: America ought to appear in her own eyes, as well as those of the French and the rest of the world; as a nation and country whose friendship and alliance is well worth cultivating. I mean not, however, by this observation, to diminish the glory of the present monarch, whose wisdom has taken advantage of the benefits which Providence offered him."

January 31, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dumas, at the Hague. "I have to thank you for your favors of the 28th and 29th, which arrived untouched by any hand too inquisitive.

The extraordinary demand for bread, in England, will be a great advantage to America. By increasing the demand in those countries which trade directly or indirectly with America, it will raise the price of it, and consequently increase the demand, and raise the price in America. We have always said in America, "By and by will come a scarce year for grain in Europe, and then the nations there will begin to think us of some consequence." There will be, I fancy, next spring and summer, a vast exportation of grain from America, which will be an advantage to our credit: and if there should be a short crop next

year and the year after, in England and the other parts of Europe, they will have an opportunity of seeing somewhat of the resources of America. For in the midst of all the difficulties of this war, grain enough will be found in America to supply the deficiencies of Europe.

Pray what are the news from Vienna? That the English are laboring with all their might; intriguing with all their subtlety; and bribing with all the money they can spare; in order to draw in the house of Austria to some connection with them, I am well persuaded. That the old jealousy, envy and rivalry of the house of Austria towards the house of Bourbon, is not all extinct; I believe. That it now pleads in favor of England, I guess. But as the emperor is a man of sense, I rely upon it, he will not be taken in. If he should be, it will only make the war more passionate against England, and he will get nothing in the end but broken bones.

The news from all quarters in America are agreeable. "All's well," as the sentinels cry at sea. The Massachusetts constitution gives new vigor to the state and its neighbors.

Have you seen *La Vie privée de Louis XV.*? It has been printed in four volumes, this month. I have read it through, with as much ardor and impatience, as I did in my youth the character of Lovelace, in *Clarissa Harlow*, and with more indignation. This work is a sublime compliment to America, as well as to Louis XVI. It is so to the reigning monarch, in proportion as his private life is a contrast to that of his predecessor. But no wisdom or virtue, public or private; no exertions or activity in the prince, ministry or nation, could have raised France out of that profound degree of contempt, misery and debasement, in which Louis XV. left it, to that height of reputation, opulence and power, where it now stands, without the separation of America from Great Britain, and her alliance with France. Let it be remembered by every Frenchman, that the first congress was held the same year that Louis XV. died; that France had seen eleven years of peace; and instead of rising out of the

misery in which the peace of 1763 left her, she sunk deeper and deeper ; that her prosperity and glory commenced with her connection with America, and has grown with a rapidity that surprises all Europe, ever since.

When other nations shall read this work, and make the proper reflections, they will draw the natural inferences. Such as, 1. That France can never desert America. 2. That France ought to exert herself with zeal, and that she will do it too. 3. That other nations will do wisely to imitate the example of France. 4. That the sooner they form connections with America, the more wisely they will act. Pardon this abominable writing. I cannot transcribe it."

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, September 22, 1809.

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### LETTER XLVI.

FEBRUARY 1, 1781, wrote to congress. " One of the most brilliant events which has yet been produced by the American revolution, is the following

#### *TREATY OF MARINE,*

Concluded at Copenhagen, the 28th of June, 1780, Old Style, between her majesty the empress of Russia, and his majesty the king of Denmark and of Norway, *for the maintenance of the liberty of neutral mercantile navigation*, and in which his majesty the king of Sweden, as well as their high mightinesses the states general of the United Provinces have taken part and acceded, and which has been signed respectively at St. Petersburg, the 21st of July, 1780, and the 5th of January, 1781.

As by the war by sea, which has actually broken out, between Great Britain on one side, and France and Spain on the other, the commerce and the navigation of neutral powers suffer considerable damages, her majesty the empress of Russia, and his majesty the king of Denmark and of Norway, in consequence of their assiduous attention, to unite their proper dignities and their cares for the safety



and well being of their subjects ; and from the regard that they have so often testified for the rights of nations in general ; have found it necessary, in the present circumstances, to determine their conduct according to these sentiments.

Her majesty the empress of Russia has, by her declaration dated the 28th of February, 1780, to the belligerent powers, exposed to light, in the face of all Europe, the fundamental principles which spring from the original law of nations, which she claims and which she adopts, as a rule of her conduct in the present war. As this attention of the empress to watch over the reciprocal rights of nations, has united the suffrages of all the neutral powers, so she has engaged herself in it, as an affair which concerns the most essential of her interests, and she has carried it to that length, that we may seriously consider it as a subject worthy of the times present and to come ; considering that it is to bring into one system and establish permanently the rights, prerogatives and engagements of neutrality. His majesty the king of Denmark and Norway, convinced of these principles, has likewise established and demanded them, in the declaration of the 8th of July, 1780, which he has caused to be presented, as well as that of Russia, to the belligerent powers ; and to give them support, he has caused to be equipped a part of his fleet. From hence has arisen the harmony and unanimity with which her majesty the empress of Russia, and his majesty the king of Denmark and Norway, have judged it necessary, by a reciprocal friendship and confidence, and conformably to the interests of their subjects, to confirm these common engagements, to be concluded by a formal convention. In this view, their said imperial and royal majesties have chosen and named for their plenipotentiaries, viz. her majesty the empress of Russia, Mr. Charles Van Osten, named Saken, present counsellor of state, knight of the order of St. Anne, minister plenipotentiary of her said majesty at the court of Denmark, &c. &c. and his majesty the king of Denmark and Norway, Mr. Otton comte De Thott, privy counsellor, knight of the order

of the Elephant, &c. Mr. Joachim Otten de Schack Re-vent Law, privy counsellor, knight of the order of the Elephant, &c. Mr. Jean Henry d'Eichstedt, privy counsellor, governor of his royal highness the hereditary prince, knight of the order of the Elephant, &c. and Mr. Andre Pierre, comte de Bernsdorff, privy counsellor, secretary of state in the department of foreign affairs, director of the royal German chancery, and knight of the order of the Elephant, &c. who, after having exchanged their full powers, which are found in good and due form, have agreed and resolved on the articles following.

*Article 1.* That their said majesties have sincerely resolved to maintain constantly the most perfect friendship and concord with the powers actually engaged in the war, and to observe the most scrupulous neutrality ; that they declare, in consequence, to hold themselves exactly to this, that the prohibition to carry on any commerce of contrabande, with the powers actually at war, or with those who may in the sequel be engaged in it, shall be strictly observed by their subjects.

2. To avoid all error and misunderstanding, concerning the subject of the name of contrabande, her majesty the empress of Russia, and his majesty the king of Denmark and Norway, declare, that they acknowledge only, as effects of contrabande, those which are comprehended in the treaties subsisting between the said courts and one or other of the belligerent powers. Her majesty the empress of Russia conforms herself entirely to the tenth and eleventh articles of her treaty of commerce with Great Britain ; and extends also the engagements of this treaty, which are entirely founded upon natural law, to the crowns of France and Spain, which at the date of the present convention, have no treaty of commerce with her empire. His majesty the king of Denmark and Norway conforms himself, on his part, principally to the second article of his treaty of commerce with Great Britain ; and to the 26th and 27th articles of his treaty of commerce with France ; and extends also the engagements of this latter to Spain, considering that he has not with his last crown

any treaty which determines any conditions on this subject.

3. As by this means the contrabande is determined and fixed, conformably to special treaties and conventions subsisting between the high contracting parties, and the belligerent powers ; and principally in the treaty between Russia and Great Britain, of the 20th of June, 1766 ; as well as by that between Denmark and Great Britain, dated the 11th of July, 1670 ; and by that concluded between Denmark and France, the 23d of August, 1742 ; the will and intention of her Russian imperial majesty, and his majesty the king of Denmark and Norway, are, that all other commerce shall be and remain free. Already their majesties, in their declarations presented to the belligerent powers, have grounded themselves upon the general principles of the law of nature, from whence are derived the liberty of commerce and of navigation, the rights of neutral nations ; and have resolved to depend no longer upon the arbitrary interpretations that partial advantages and momentary interests may dictate ; in this view they have agreed upon the following articles.

*Article 1.* That it shall be lawful for every vessel to navigate from one port to another, and upon the coasts of the belligerent powers.

*Article 2.* That the effects belonging to the subjects of the belligerent powers, shall be free, upon neutral vessels, except merchandizes of contrabande.

*Article 3.* That to determine what ought to be held a port of blockade : that alone can be considered as such, in which the vessels which would enter shall be exposed to an evident danger, by the force which with this view attacks it, and by its vessels, which shall have taken a station sufficiently near.

*Article 4.* That neutral vessels may only be stopped for just causes, and upon evident proofs ; that, without loss of time, right shall be done them, and the procedures shall be always uniform, prompt and according to the laws ; and that, every time, besides reparation to those who shall have suffered without cause, there shall also be

given a complete satisfaction for the insult committed against the flag of their majesties.

To the end to protect the general commerce of their subjects, supported by the fundamental rules above laid down, her majesty the empress of all the Russias, and his majesty the king of Denmark and Norway, have thought fit, each one in particular, in order to obtain these ends, to equip a proportional number of vessels of war and frigates. The squadron of each one of these respective powers shall be stationed in a certain latitude, and shall be employed in convoys, according to the exigency of the case, in which the commerce and navigation of each nation may be.

*Article 5.* If the merchant ships of one of the contracting powers, shall be in a part of the sea where the ships of war of their own nation are not stationed, and for this reason cannot enjoy their protection; in that case, the commander of the vessels of war of the other power, being thereto required, shall grant them with good faith and sincerity, the necessary assistance. And in this case, the vessels of war and frigates of one of the two powers, shall protect and support the merchant vessels of the other; provided nevertheless, that under the shelter of the protection demanded, there be not exercised any prohibited commerce, contrary to the laws adopted by the neutrality.

*Article 6.* The present convention cannot be retroactive, and by consequence we cannot take part in differences which have arisen before its conclusion; at least if these affairs do not concern violences which continue still, and which tend to oppress all the neutral nations of Europe.

*Article 7.* If, in spite of the vigilant and friendly care of the two powers, and the exact observation of the neutrality on their part, the Russian or Danish merchant vessels are insulted or taken by the vessels of war or privateers of one or the other of the belligerent powers; in that case, the minister of the party offended shall make representations to the court whose vessels of war or priva-

teers shall have been guilty of this act ; shall demand restitution of the vessel taken, and shall insist upon a suitable reparation, without ever losing sight of the satisfaction for the insult done to the flag. The minister of the other contracting party shall second efficaciously and seriously these representations, and shall thus continue them conjointly and unanimously : but if they refuse or put off from time to time, to do right touching such grievances ; in this case, their majesties shall make reprisals against the power which refuses to do them right, and shall unite themselves forthwith, in the most efficacious measures for this just reprisal.

*Article 8.* If one or the other of the contracting powers, or both together, in virtue of this convention, or any other which may be made, which may have relation to it, are disturbed, molested, or attacked, it is agreed that the two powers shall act in concert to defend themselves reciprocally, and to procure themselves, by united efforts, an entire and satisfactory reparation, both for the insult done to the flag, and for the loss caused to their subjects.

*Article 9.* This convention is resolved and fixed for all the time that the present war shall continue, and shall serve as the basis of all the engagements which may be contracted in the sequel, according to the circumstances of the times, and upon occasion of new wars at sea, which may unfortunately trouble the repose of Europe ; besides which, these conditions shall be regarded as subsisting, and shall have a legal validity in the affairs both of commerce and of navigation, and in the determination of the rights of neutral nations.

*Article 10.* As the end and the principal motive of this convention is to assure the general liberty of commerce and of navigation, her majesty the empress of Russia, and his majesty the king of Denmark and of Norway agree and engage before hand to permit, that other neutral powers accede to this convention, and by taking cognizance of these principles, to partake also of the obligations and advantages of the said convention.

*Article 11.* To the end that the belligerent powers may not pretend a cause of ignorance of these said engagements between the said courts, the high contracting parties will communicate in a manner the most friendly, to all the belligerent powers, these measures in which they have united ; which measures are so much the less hostile, as they are not hurtful to any other power, but have solely for their object, the safety of the commerce and of the navigation of their respective subjects.

*Article 12.* The present convention shall be ratified by the two contracting parties, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in good form, in the term of six weeks, to be computed from the signatures, or even sooner, if it may be. In faith of which, we have, in virtue of our full powers, signed the present, and sealed it with our seals. Done at Copenhagen, the 19th of July, 1780.

(L. S.) CHARLES VAN OSTEN, *named* SAKEN.

(L. S.) I. SCHACK RATHLAW.

(L. S.) A. P. COMTE DE BERNSDORFF.

(L. S.) O. THOTT.

(L. S.) H. EICKSTEDT.

The ratifications of this convention were exchanged at Copenhagen, the 5-16 of September, 1780, by the same ministers plenipotentiary who signed it ; and as to this end, the ministers plenipotentiary named to this purpose, viz. on the part of her imperial majesty, Mr. Le Comte Nikia Panin, actually privy counsellor, senator, chamberlain in exercise, and knight of the orders of St. Andrew, St. Alexander Newsky and St. Ann, and Mr. Le Comte John Osterman, vice chancellor, privy counsellor, and knight of the orders of St. Alexander Newsky and St. Ann ; and on the part of his majesty the king of Sweden, Mr. Le Baron Frederick Van Nolken, envoy extraordinary of his Swedish majesty at the court of her imperial majesty, chamberlain, commandant of the order of the Polar Star, knight of the orders of the Sword and of St. John, have signed, the 21st of July, 1780, at St. Peterburg, a similar convention, conceived in the same form,

and word for word of the same tenor with that signed at Copenhagen, except the second article, in which the stipulations of contrabande being resolved and ratified, to which they are to adhere, in consequence of treaties subsisting between the crown of Sweden and the other powers, we have to this purpose, to avoid the repetition of what has been already said, added here literally the second article.

We ought further to recollect, that the two kings, who have joined in this affair to her imperial majesty, have acceded as principal contracting parties to the treaties concluded between her imperial majesty and the said courts, and have signed with their own hands upon this subject, on one part and on the other, an act which has been exchanged at St. Petersburg, by the ministry of her imperial Russian majesty.

Here follows the second article of the treaty concluded and signed at St. Petersburg, the 21st of July, 1780, between her imperial majesty, and his majesty the king of Sweden.

*Article 2.* To avoid all error and misunderstanding, on the subject of the name of contrabande, her imperial majesty of Russia and his majesty the king of Sweden, declare, that they acknowledge only, as effects of contrabande, those which are contained in the treaties subsisting between the said courts and one or other of the belligerent powers. Her majesty the empress of Russia conforms herself in this entirely to the 10th and 11th articles of her treaty of commerce with Great Britain, and extends also the engagements of this treaty, which are founded entirely on the law of nature, to the crowns of France and Spain, which at the date of this convention have no treaty of commerce with her empire. His majesty the king of Sweden refers himself principally on his part to the 11th article of his treaty of commerce with Great Britain, and to the tenor of the preliminary treaty of commerce, concluded in the year 1747, between the crown of Sweden and France; although in this last the contents of contrabande are not expressly determined,

but that as the two powers have therein understood to consider one another as *Gentes Amicissimæ*, and that as Sweden has therein reserved the same advantages which the Hanseatic cities enjoy in France, from the most remote times to the present; the advantages which are comprehended in the treaty of Utrecht being confirmed, the King has not found any thing necessary to be added. With regard to Spain, the king finds himself in the same case as the empress, and after her example, he extends to this crown the engagements of the said treaties, wholly founded on natural law. Their high mightinesses the states general of the United Provinces of the low countries, have acceded, the 20th of November, 1780, upon the same footing, to the said convention; and it has been signed, the 5th of January, 1781, at St. Petersburg, only with the addition of a

*13th Article*, which, with relation to command, in case of rencounter or combination of the squadrons and the vessels of war of the two parties, there shall be observed, what has been the usage, between crowned heads and the republic.

Amsterdam, February 2, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dumas, at the Hague. “Nulla dies sine Limeâ, said a great geometrician; and you are so good an American, that you will agree with me, that we ought to let no day or hour pass, in which we can do any service to our country, without embracing the opportunity. Such an occasion is the present, when the popular affections, and even the sentiments of men in power seem to be turning towards America. When I landed in Spain, I was told by the viceroy of Gallicia, that he had received orders from the court of Madrid, to treat all Americans who should arrive within his government, as the best friends of Spain. Would it not be wisdom and policy, as well as humanity, for their high mightinesses to imitate this example; and to publish some permission to Dutch men of war, privateers, letters of marque, and even merchantmen, to carry their prizes and cargoes into American ports, and to trade with that country? And also some permission to Amer-



ican privateers and other vessels, to come freely into the ports of this republic ; bring in their prizes, sell them, and even have them condemned in the courts of admiralty ? What reasonable objection or argument can there be against this ? What damage can it do the republic ? Cannot we contrive to have this suggested to all the northern courts ?

By the 10th article of the treaty of alliance with France, the most christian king and the United States agree to invite or admit other powers, who may have received injuries from England, to make common cause with them, and to accede to that alliance, under such conditions as shall be freely agreed to and settled between all the parties. Is not this a proper opportunity for congress to propose to the king of France to join in such an invitation to all the neutral powers, as we yet call them, though it seems they are all within a hair's breadth of being belligerent powers ?

February 2, 1781, wrote to Messrs. John De Neufville and Son. " Having adjusted the form of the obligations to be given in the proposed loan, nothing remains but to agree upon the other terms, respecting the commission to be allowed to your house, for receiving the money from the lenders, and finally paying off and discharging the obligations. I have had much conversation upon this subject with several gentlemen of character and experience ; and am advised that one per cent. for paying of the interest, and one per cent. for paying off the principal finally to the lenders, is a just and reasonable allowance. This I am willing to allow. There is the affair of brokerage, also, which will require some explanation between us. I should be glad if you would inform me how much you expect to be allowed for brokerage, when you engage and employ the broker ? But there is one point that I beg leave to reserve to myself and to any other minister or agent, who may be sent here in my stead : it is this, that I, while I stay, and my successor after me, shall have a right to employ any broker that I or he may choose, and whenever one or the other may think proper

to dispose of the obligations, or as many of them as one or the other may see fit, and allow what brokerage we shall find necessary : the money, however, received upon them, to be paid into the hands of your house. I should be glad of your answer as soon as may be ; and in the mean time, I have no further objection to your getting the form of the obligations and coupons translated into Dutch, and printed with all expedition.”

In this place, a few words in explanation are necessary. Such was the dejection and despondency of the whole nation, that I was candidly told by all the gentlemen in whom I had any confidence, that a loan was desperate, except Mr. De Neufville, who was very confident that he could obtain a considerable sum, and was extremely importunate with me to open a loan in his house. That gentleman's politeness and hospitality drew all Americans to his house, and he had made them believe that he could do much, if I would authorise him. I had spies enough upon me, from England, France, and America too, very ready to impute blame to me. Congress were constantly drawing upon me, and there was the utmost danger that their bills would be protested. If this event should happen, I knew that representations in private letters would go to America and to France, that this fatal calamity was wholly owing to my negligence and obstinacy in refusing to open a loan in Mr. De Neufville's house. I thought it my duty, therefore, to try the experiment. It could do no harm, for we had certainly at that moment, no credit to lose. The loan was opened, and all the industry, enterprise and credit of Mr. De Neufville, never disposed of more than five obligations, amounting to five thousand guilders, three thousand of which were lent by Mr. John Luzac, who had previously promised me to advance that sum whenever my loan should be opened, though it should be in the house of Mr. De Neufville. I was not disappointed, however, in the result, because I had absolutely no expectations.

Amsterdam, February 4, 1781, wrote to Mr. Searle, at Paris. “ I had the honor of your favor of the 24th of

January, only yesterday. F. is indeed arrived here ; but I cannot learn that R. R. is. I have not been honored with a visit, as yet, nor have I seen him.

There is a courier arrived from Petersburg, who carried the news of sir Joseph Yorke's leaving the Hague. All's well in the north.

The spirit here waxes warmer. A new play is brought upon the stage, called *De Ruiter*, in which the English are treated as you would wish them, and every line in which they are so, is applauded a tout rompre, that is, in plain English, to make all split. I will observe your recommendation concerning Mr. Bromfield, who is still here. I wish I were at Paris with you. It is more agreeable there than here, at present, as well as more healthy.

If the neutral confederation should become belligerent, would it not be a proper time for France and America to join in proposing to the nations that compose it, to acknowledge American independence? There is an article in our treaty to this purpose. Dr. Franklin has authority to treat with any power in Europe, at least the commissioners had, and I suppose the dissolution of that commission has not annulled the authority. I wish you would converse with the doctor upon the subject. If he thinks he has not power, would it not be proper to write to congress upon the subject? If something of this kind is not done, the northern powers may settle their war and leave us still to fight it out. The article I refer to is the tenth of the treaty of alliance. "The most christian king and the United States agree to invite or admit other powers, who may have received injuries from England to make common cause with them, and to accede to that alliance under such conditions as shall be freely agreed to and settled between all the parties." Pray talk about this with Mr. Dana. There never can be a more inviting opportunity than the present, to execute this article of the treaty.

Amsterdam, February 6, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dumas at the Hague. "I have received your favors of the 3d

and 5th, with their enclosures, all in good order. I have but one copy of the treaty of alliance, otherwise I would send you one with pleasure. I am of your opinion, that no propositions should be yet made to the states general as a body : but hints and ideas may be suggested to individuals, in order to prepare men's minds, by familiarizing them with such speculations. There are critical moments, after which things go of themselves ; but it is necessary to prepare things for a crisis, that every thing may be ready when it arrives. The art of a midwife often assists the birth and avoids fatal dangers in constitutions by nature the most vigorous ; and the whole corps diplomatic, with all their superb pomp, are but a company of Grannies.

Mr. Searle declares that congress gave me a commission of minister plenipotentiary at the same time that they gave Mr. Laurens his. But if Mr. Searle is not mistaken, which I rather believe, the full powers to me, were omitted to be sent me, by some neglect. For I tell you candidly I have no other powers but a commission to borrow money. As to Mr. Franklin's power, the matter stands thus. The three commissioners at the court of Versailles, Dr. Franklin, Mr. Arthur Lee and myself, had full power by a resolution of congress, to treat and make a treaty of commerce with any power in Europe. Whether the dissolution of that commission, annuls that full power, may be a question. But the subsequent appointment of Mr. Laurens, with full power to treat with the republic (if Mr. Searle is right, and congress ever did give Mr. Laurens such a power) would, I suspect, be legally or diplomatically considered as a supersedeas of that authority here. So that considering things candidly, I am afraid there is nobody now in Europe, fully authorized to treat with this republic, unless it be Mr. Laurens. The accessions of the nations which compose the neutral confederacy, to the treaty of alliance, would, however, be an event so splendid and decisive for America, that there is not a doubt to be made, that congress would joyfully ratify it, in the first moment, whether it was made by Dr.

Franklin or me, or even if it were made by the king of France, without consulting either of us, provided it were made upon equitable conditions.

I find the people are alike in some particulars, in every part of the world. This nation now flatters itself with hopes of peace. They think that when England sees the neutral confederation ready to go to war with her, she will retract, beg pardon, change the ministry, make peace, rise in arms against the ministry, &c. &c. &c. Alas! there will be no such thing. Great numbers of cannon balls must fly before any thing of this kind happens. I should have thought this cool, penetrating nation more intimately acquainted with the English heart. The pride of that people is infinite. Nine in ten of them fully and firmly believe themselves able to fight and beat all the maritime powers of the world. Their imaginations are all on fire. They think of nothing but drowning Holland, sinking the whole Russian, Danish and Swedish fleets, exhausting the finances of France and Spain; and above all, they flatter themselves that the Americans love, admire, and adore them so much, that they will very soon very humbly implore their king to take them under his majesty's most gracious protection without even making a condition. No sir! National combinations, political arrangements, and magnificent parade will not overawe the English in their present state of intoxication. Nothing but hard blows, taking their fleets of merchant ships, and taking, sinking and burning their men of war will bring them to reason. Nor this neither, until it is carried to such a length, as to deprive such numbers of people of their subsistence as to make them rise in outrages against the government. I am sorry that things must go to such an extremity, but I have not the least doubt that they will.

JOHN ADAMS.

*Quincy, September 29, 1809.*

## LETTER XLVII.

AMSTERDAM, February 7, 1781, wrote to congress. "By the tenth article of the treaty of alliance with France, the most christian king and the United States agree to invite or admit other powers who may have received injuries from England, to make common cause with them, and to accede to that alliance, under such conditions as shall be freely agreed to, and settled between all the parties. According to present appearances, in a few weeks, Russia, Denmark, Sweden and Holland, the nations that form the neutral confederation, will be at war with England; and the first moments of warmth and enthusiasm occasioned by this rupture, will be the most favorable for France and the United States to join in an invitation to all those powers to accede to that alliance. At present, it is a great question whether there is any person now in Europe legally authorized to treat with any power, except France and Spain. It is true, that the commissioners at the court of Versailles, had formerly, by a resolution of congress, which I believe was inserted in the commission, which I had the honor to carry over to France, in 1778, authority to treat with any power in Europe. But it may now be justly questioned whether the dissolution of that commission has not dissolved that power. In order to remove all doubt, I submit to the consideration of congress, whether it would not be proper to give a formal commission to some person or other, to treat with these powers, and Prussia too.

I am very sorry that I have it not in my power to give congress more favorable intelligence on the subject of a loan. I am ashamed to say that I have not been able, with all the solicitations that decency would countenance, either to persuade an house to undertake a loan, or a broker to negotiate it. The dread of doing any thing which should give a color of complaint to England, or of furnishing the opposite party with a pretence to charge any one with directly or indirectly causing a war, has been such, that no man dared to undertake any thing. Even

at this moment, there are so many hopes of peace, and so many solitudes about being supported by Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, that every thing moves very heavily. I am asked every day, with great anxiety, have you power to make a treaty with us? I answer no; I have not; I have only power to negotiate a loan. I am told that by beginning my negotiation for a loan, without going to the states general first, and the prince of Orange, at least, without its being known that I have a commission to treat with them, I shall spoil my affair. I believe this to be true, but I cannot help it. I must obey the orders of congress, and bills of exchange will soon become payable. I shall, therefore, try the experiment, with little hopes of success. I can say no more than this, that congress may depend upon it, they never will obtain a loan for any considerable sum of money, until they have a minister here. If a minister is not sent, this nation, after what has passed, will be disgusted. It is certainly ill policy to neglect a nation which is more likely than any other to be affectionately attached to us, as they are the centre of the commerce of the world; as they are lovers of liberty, though the form of their government cannot be said to be absolutely free; and as they are of the protestant religion. Whether congress will think proper to give the same minister power to represent them in this republic and the other powers of the maritime confederation, or whether they will send a minister to the empress of Russia, with authority to treat with all the others, giving at the same time a commission to another to reside here, or whether they will send a minister to each of the maritime powers, I must submit to their wisdom.

I have, this day, the honor of a letter from Mr. Lovel, dated the 12th of December, 1780, enclosing a resolution of congress, of the same day, which does me great honor. I shall continue to do every thing in my power to honor the bills that have been drawn, and that I have accepted, or may accept; but with very imperfect hopes of success, without the assistance of Mr. Franklin, or a power to treat upon political subjects, and obtaining the countenance of

the states. At present I have no such power, and it would only make matters worse, if I were to ask any countenance from government. Most of the bills of the 6th of June, have appeared and been accepted by me, upon the consent of Mr. Franklin to pay them, if I cannot. No others have as yet arrived. When they do, I must again apply to Dr. Franklin. If he cannot engage to pay them, I shall be obliged, for what I see at present, to let them be protested for non-acceptance, for it would certainly be better to have them protested, than to have the agent for congress engaged for them, unable to pay them, sent to prison, or declared bankrupt. I hope, however, that nothing so disagreeable will happen. I hope that Mr. Franklin will obtain of France enough to pay them. There is a firm confidence here, that they will be paid some way or other ; for it is certain there are no bills in better credit, or greater demand. They will fetch goods or money at any time, and of almost any person. This is a great consolation to me, and an excellent symptom for the public.”

Amsterdam, February 8, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dana, at Paris. “I had yesterday the pleasure of receiving two letters from you : one dated February 1, and one without a date, written, as I suppose, the day before. With these I received the packets ; but there are in them no letters from my wife. The resolution of congress of the 12th of December, gives me great pleasure, as it proves that we had the good fortune to be possessed of the true principles of congress, and to enter fully into their views in the resolutions of last March, respecting the paper money ; but I cannot recollect what were the two papers in the duplicate, more than in the original. I assure you, sir, I have not had more satisfaction in the resolution, than in the affectionate manner in which Mr. Lovel and you have communicated it to me. I am prepared in my own mind to receive from congress resolutions of a different nature ; but of these we will say nothing until we see them. [The resolutions here meant as expected, were resolutions of



recal, or at least of censure, upon the petulent and groundless complaint of Vergennes.]

I must beg of you to send me a key to the cyphers : the letters are wholly unintelligible for want of one.

I see by the journal of congress, that we are authorized to accede to the principles of the empress of Russia ; but I find no commission for that purpose, nor any resolution of congress, authenticated by the secretary or the committee. Will you talk with —, and —, and — about what is proper to be done ?

All accounts from all parts of America shew that a great spirit reigns triumphant. A vigor, an elasticity, appears in all its parts, notwithstanding the croaking of —, of —, and of —. The last has been here, and gone away without doing me the honor of a visit. The repulse of Rodney and Vaughan is a grand stroke ; a balance for five or six Jersey affairs. All things in all quarters conspire to shew that the English will have their fill of glorious war. Gillon's hour of failing is uncertain ; not for a long time, I fear. Do you learn any thing of Davis's arrival or capture, or loss ? If I had a commission as minister here, I verily believe I could borrow money : without it, no man ever will, in any considerable quantity."

Same day, February 8, wrote to Mr. Searle. "Yesterday I was honored with your's of the 1st of February. I agree with you, that affairs look very well at home ; but what shall we do with the croakers ? Is it that these wretches are merely superficial ? or do they only want to magnify their merit, in being faithful to so difficult a cause ? Or are they Arnoldized ? However, I have had so long experience of many of these grunting grumbletonians, that I do not suspect treason when I hear them sigh and groan.

Chesapeake Bay is a fine trap. *Our allies will help to catch a grand flock of vultures there, by and by.* I suspect they will all fly there and to Charlston soon, from New-York.

Congress are ameliorating every thing. Their economy will save have half the expenses of the war. I wish they had redeemed the bills at seventy for one. I do not, however, like the penalty which Pennsylvania has laid for taking the paper at less than silver. All attempt of this kind will be eluded and found vain. I am a mortal enemy to all embargoes, regulations of prices, or violent endeavors to preserve the credit of paper. They do no good, but a great deal of hurt. I fancy that American grain will be in demand, and Europe must convoy it home, or starve. Vermont will plague us a little. I expect to hear that one or two there, are Arnoldized. It is a piece of policy exactly equal to the British geniuses at this day, to bribe four or five fellows there, with a little gold and a great many fine promises that they shall enjoy their lands under the British government. But it will end in the flight of these devils *A L'Arnoldaise*. However, England must have a series of tricks and pranks to keep up the spirit of the poor mob."

Same day, February 8, wrote to Mr. Dumas, (after inserting a copy of the resolutions of congress upon my letter of the 10th of April, 1780.) "Thus you see that I began the mischief, and I assure you I am ready to finish it, if properly invited, and a very little invitation will do. I am extremely pleased with the modesty of the resolutions of congress upon the subject, and not less so with the sublime language in which a young poetical genius first expressed his feelings in his motion. This motion and the resolution set off one another. Pray, sir, give me your opinion whether it is advisable for me to take any steps in the business at present. I think it will be proper to publish it, and if you are of the same opinion, you will oblige me by having the whole extract printed as it is; because I am very ambitious of the honor of having occasioned such fine compliments to the empress, and the display of so much simple wisdom in congress. We have an abundance of news from America, all of which you will see in the public papers, as soon as you will receive this. All is well still in America."

Amsterdam, February 9, wrote to ——. “I have this day the honor of your’s of the 5th. It would be unwise in congress to neglect any effort to induce other powers of Europe to acknowledge our independence; and therefore, I am fully of opinion, that at least one minister should be sent to treat with the maritime powers, or rather the neutral union. For these powers will all acknowledge our independence at once, and none of them will do it separately. But Spain is an horrid obstacle to every other court’s taking this step. Spain, which is more interested in it even than France, hesitates; and Jay is hung up there, as I am here, an object of ridicule. Congress will not exhibit more of these objects than are necessary. Every body shakes his head, and cries, why don’t Spain acknowledge your independence? *I know the reason very well, but I cannot tell it.* I think that reason equally impolitic and ungenerous. But how can we help it?”

Although prudence forbad my explaining “the reason” at that time, there is no necessity of concealing it now. I then believed, and I still believe, that the policy of the count de Vergennes, which exerted all its resources through the duke de la Vauguion, at the Hague, to embarrass me, and through the marquis of Verac, to obstruct Mr. Dana at Petersburg, was employed at Madrid through the count Montmorin, to retard Mr. Jay; for his fundamental and universal principle appeared to be *to keep us entirely dependent on France.*

Amsterdam, February 12, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dumas. “I have received your’s of the 9th and 10th of this month. The resolution of congress is printed and published in their journal, and of course in all the American newspapers, and all the other newspapers of the world. Congress have a secret journal, in which they enter every thing that they mean to keep secret; and a public journal, which is printed every day. Whatever is inserted in this, congress mean and intend shall be made known immediately to all the world. Accordingly, whatever any European novelist can find in this journal, is free booty.

It was necessary, moreover, that this resolution should be published in Europe without loss of time, for the government of American frigates, privateers and letters of marque, who, before this resolution, did not hold themselves bound by the armed neutrality, any more than Spain does now towards Denmark. Again, a publication of it here was all the use that could consistently be made of it, at present, as I have not received any authenticated copy of the resolution, other than the journal.

I know not the motives which Mr. De Neufville had, in inviting you to Amsterdam, unless it was for the sake of good company, which is motive enough. I am now very busy in finishing my plan of a loan. When it is done, I will go to Leyden, and either wait on you at the Hague, or ask the favor of you to meet me at Leyden. I have it not in my power at present to do any thing more than Mr. Franklin has done, that is, refer you to congress respecting the subject of money [i. e. the payment of his pension.] I think, however, it will not be long before some body or other will have power to decide upon that matter here.

Pray, have you a cypher from Mr. Lovel? I have a long letter from him, which is absolutely unintelligible to me, for want of his cypher."

JOHN ADAMS.

*Quincy, October 6, 1809.*

# CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

ADAMS

## LATE PRESIDENT ADAMS.

=====  
No.—8,  
=====

### LETTER XLVIII.

AMSTERDAM, February 15, 1781, wrote to Dr. Franklin. This morning the house of Botereau & Co. of this city, presented to me sixty six bills of exchange drawn by congress, on the 26th day of October last, in favor of Nathaniel Tracy, of Newburyport, amounting to the sum of ten thousand pounds sterling, payable at ninety days sight.

I was obliged to ask the favor of the house to wait until I could write to your excellency, to see if you can furnish the funds to discharge these bills. Without your warranty, they must be protested; for I have not yet obtained a single ducat, nor any certain assurances of one. I have at length fixed my plan, and when it shall be made certain that the war with England is to continue, the prospectus will be published, and the experiment tried. Some persons think I shall get some money; but there is no certainty of it. If this people should make peace with England, which they will if they can, we shall get no money at all. I think, however, that a peace is impossible, and therefore am not without hopes of borrowing some money. I must request the honor of your excellency's answer by the return of post; because at that time, Mr. Botereau will expect an answer from me."

Am, February —, 1781, wrote to Mr. Bicker. Your questions to me to day, have induced me to communicate to you, in confidence, a copy of my commission. I have not the title of ambassador, nor of plenipotentiary of this commission, and have I in express words, power to make a treaty of trade and commerce, much less a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive. My power is to negotiate a loan. But it cannot be negotiated with any person or persons, bodies public and corporate, and the congress promises in good faith to ratify and confirm whatever shall be done by me in the premises, or relating thereto. Dr. Franklin, Mr. Deane and Mr. Lee, who made a treaty of amity and commerce, and another of alliance offensive and defensive with the king of France, had not by their commission the title of ambassadors, nor of ministers plenipotentiary. Now if it is necessary to make a treaty in order to obtain a loan, I suppose I have the power to do it, and accordingly I would readily enter into conferences upon the subject, and if we could agree upon the terms, one article of which should be a loan, I would not hesitate to execute a treaty, and I should have no doubt of the ratification of congress. You have, however, a copy of my commission, and you may judge for yourself how extensive the powers are, which it contains. I have no objection to your shewing it to such person or persons as you think proper, in confidence."

At this time I gave up my lodgings at Amsterdam, and removed to Leyden, where on the 25th of February, 1781, I received from the president of congress the following letter :

*“ Philadelphia, January 1, 1781.*

“ SIR—You will receive herewith enclosed, a commission as minister plenipotentiary to the United Provinces of the low countries, with instructions for your government on that important mission, as also a plan of a treaty with those states ; and likewise a resolve of congress relative to the declaration of the empress of Russia, respecting the protection of neutral ships, &c.

“ Proper letters of credence on the subject of your mission, will be forwarded by the next conveyance ; but it is thought inexpedient to delay the present dispatches on that account. I have the honor to be, with the highest respect and esteem, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, *President.*

“ *The Hon. JOHN ADAMS, Esq.*”

With this letter I received my commission as minister plenipotentiary to their high mightinesses, dated the 29th day of December, 1780; and the resolution of congress of the 5th of October, 1780, authorising their ministers to accede to the armed neutrality, both of which documents you have already printed in the Patriot. Soon after the receipt of them, I returned to Amsterdam, and took lodgings again in the city tavern.

Arms of Amsterdam, March 1, 1781, wrote to Mr. Bicker. “ I received your letter at Leyden, enclosing the copy I had the honor to send you, and thank you for your judgment of its extent and import.

I have now the honor to inform you, that on my return to Amsterdam, the 25th of February, I received a letter from congress, enclosing another commission, in proper form, containing full powers to treat with their high mightinesses, and to conclude and sign a treaty. I received also authority to accede to the principles of the armed neutrality.

I should now be still more obliged by your candid opinion of what is the best course for me to pursue.”

Same day, March 1, wrote to Mr. Dumas. “ The letters I received at Leyden, obliged me to leave you sooner than I intended ; but I shall soon see you again at the Hague. I have received important dispatches from congress, upon which I want your advice. I hope it is no bad news. You will say nothing ; reflect well upon the times, and be prepared to answer me serious questions upon public affairs. Nothing personal, nor selfish, nor little. I shall see you in the course of next week, if no-

thing turns up to prevent it, which I do not foresee. Raise not your expectations too high. Remember *Ni Admirari.*”

I soon returned to Leyden, and determined to begin by communicating the resolution of congress to the ambassadors of the neutral courts; first to that from Russia.

*Leyden, March 8, 1781.*

“SIR—I have lately received from congress, as one of their ministers plenipotentiary, their resolution of the 5th of October last, relative to the rights of neutral vessels, a copy of which I do myself the honor to enclose to your excellency, as the representative of one of the high contracting parties to the marine treaty lately concluded, concerning this subject. As I am fixed by my duty, for the present, to this part of Europe, I have no other way of communicating this measure of congress to the northern courts, but by the favor of their ministers in this republic. I must therefore request of your excellency, if there is no impropriety in it, to transmit the resolution to the minister of foreign affairs of her imperial majesty.

Your excellency will permit me to add, that I should esteem myself very fortunate to be the instrument of pledging in form the faith of the United States of America, to a reformation in the maritime law of nations, which does so much honor to the present age. I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect and consideration, sir, your excellency’s most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

*His excellency the prince de Gallietzin,  
minister plenipotentiary of her majesty the empress of Russia, at the Hague.”*

“*Leyden, March 8, 1781.*

“SIR—I have received from congress, as one of their ministers plenipotentiary, their resolution of the 5th of October last, relative to the rights of neutral vessels, a copy of which I do myself the honor to enclose to your excellency, as minister of one of the high contracting



parties to the marine treaty lately concluded, concerning this subject.

As I have no other way of communicating this measure of congress to the northern courts, but by favor of their ministers in this republic, I must request your excellency to transmit it to the minister of foreign affairs of his majesty the king of Sweden.

Permit me to add, that I should think myself very happy to be the means of engaging, in form, the faith of the United States of America, to the observance of a treaty which forms an epocha in the history of commerce, and must have consequences so beneficial to mankind.

I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect and consideration, sir, your excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

*His excellency the baron D'Ehrensward,  
envoy of his majesty the king of Sweden,  
at the Hague."*

"Leyden, March 8, 1781.

"SIR—I have received, as minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America, a resolution of congress of the 5th of October last, relative to the rights of neutral vessels, a copy of which I do myself the honor to enclose to your excellency, as the minister of one of the high contracting parties to the marine treaty lately concluded, concerning this subject.

As I have no other way of communicating this measure of congress to the northern courts, but by favor of their ministers here, I must request your excellency to transmit it to the minister of foreign affairs of his majesty the king of Denmark.

Your excellency will give me leave to add, that I should esteem it a very high honor to be the means of engaging, in form, the faith of the United States to the observance of regulations of so much importance to a free communication by sea, between all nations. With the greatest respect and consideration, &c. JOHN ADAMS.

*His excellency the baron De St. Saphorin,  
envoy of his majesty the king of Den-  
mark, at the Hague."*

## MEMORIAL

To their high mightinesses the states general of the United Provinces of the Low Countries.

*High and Mighty Lords,*

The subscriber, a minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America, has the honor to lay before your high mightinesses, as one of the high contracting parties to the marine treaty lately concluded, relative to the rights of neutral vessels, a resolution of congress of the 5th of October last, concerning the same subject.

As the American revolution furnished the occasion of a reformation in the maritime law of nations, of so much importance to a free communication among mankind by sea, the subscriber hopes it may not be thought improper, that the United States should become parties to it, entitled to its benefits, and subjected to its duties. To this end, the subscriber has the honor of requesting that the resolution of congress may be taken into the consideration of your high mightinesses, and transmitted to the courts of Russia, Sweden and Denmark. The subscriber begs leave to subjoin, that he should esteem it one of the most fortunate events of his life, if this proposition should meet with the approbation of your high mightinesses and the other powers who are parties to the neutral confederation, and he be admitted as the instrument of pledging the faith of the United States, to the observance of regulations which do so much honor to the present age.

JOHN ADAMS.

*The Hague, 8th March, 1781."*

*" Leyden, March 8, 1781.*

" SIR—I have the honor to enclose a copy of a resolution of congress of the 5th of October last; and to inform your excellency, that I have this day communicated it to their high mightinesses the states general of the United Provinces, and to the ministers of the courts of Russia, Sweden and Denmark, at the Hague.

Your excellency will permit me to hope for your concurrence, as there may be occasion, in support of this

measure ; and to assure you of the great respect and consideration with which I have the honor to be, sir, your excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

*His excellency the duke de la Vauguion,  
ambassador of France, at the Hague."*

"Leyden, March 8, 1781.

"SIR—I have the honor to enclose a resolution of congress of the 5th of October last, and to inform you that I have this day communicated it to their high mightinesses the states general, and to the ministers of Russia, Sweden and Denmark, at the Hague. With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

*Mr. M. Van Berckel, first counsellor  
pensionary of the city of Amsterdam."*

"Leyden, March 8, 1781.

"SIR—I have the honor to enclose a resolution of congress of the 5th of October last, and to acquaint you that I have this day communicated it to their high mightinesses the states general, and to their excellencies the ministers of the courts of Russia, Sweden and Denmark, at the Hague. With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

*Mr. Visser, counsellor pensionary of the  
city of Amsterdam, at the Hague."*

These papers I sent to Mr. Dumas, at the Hague, to be all delivered with his own hand, an office with which he was extremely delighted, because as he said it enabled him "à commencer à jouer un Rêe public."

Leyden, March 8, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dumas. "Dear sir, I send you the letters. If any thing is necessary to be added to the memorial, before the signature, you will be so good as to add it. I should be obliged to you for a line by the bearer, in return, and the news, if any. My first demarche, you see, is on the prince's birth day, which

is no doubt, a good omen, both to his highness and your servant. You will please to put a wafer under the seals."

JOHN ADAMS.

*Quincy, October 6, 1809.*

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### LETTER XLIX.

Leyden, March 10, 1781, wrote to commodore Gillon. "I have received the letter you did me the honor to write me on the 8th of this month, requesting me to furnish you with fifty obligations of the United States, to enable you to discharge the debts of the ships, of which you have the command, in the service of the state of South Carolina.

I have considered your letter, sir, and all the arguments contained in it, with all that attention and respect which is due to your character, and to the state in whose service you are; but the more I have reflected upon them, the more clearly I have been convinced of the impropriety of my consenting to what you request. It would be an illegal and unconstitutional step; without the color of authority. It would be a precedent that would not only be pernicious, but ruinous to the United States. In short, it would be no better than an embezzlement of the public money; to say this, is quite sufficient to justify my final refusal.

I might add to this, considerations of various other kinds; but they are unnecessary, and it would be improper for me to mention in this letter, things which ought to be kept secret. I am myself in a situation much more deplorable than yours; because the danger to the public credit of the thirteen United States, is certainly of more consequence, and more melancholy, than the danger or loss of a single ship, whether she belongs to the United States or any one of them. If this whole matter were to be laid before congress, the delegates from South Carolina themselves, would be the first to justify me. I feel for you and your disappointment. I know your exertions.

But this can be no excuse for me, to do a wrong thing, knowing it to be so."

Same day, March 10, wrote to Mr. Dumas. "I am obliged to you for your note of the 9th, and now enclose you the copies I promised of the resolve of 5th of October 1780."

Leyden, March 11, 1781, wrote to Dr. Cooper. "This is merely an introduction to the consul of France, monsieur de L'Etombe; a character that I think will please in Boston; without pomp, vanity or affectation; a sensible and agreeable man.

The emperor of Germany and the empress of Russia are meditating, but to no purpose. England is only laboring to embroil all Europe. The Dutch are fighting and praying for peace; but they cannot obtain it."

Leyden, March 11, 1781, wrote to the honorable Samuel Adams. "I have only time to introduce to you Mr. De L'Etombe, consul of France, to reside at Boston, for the northern states. I think America will find in this gentleman a worthy, able friend of his own country and of ours.

The nation with whom I reside is in a critical situation. Our affairs here are in the same state of suspense with their own. I can promise nothing with respect to money, commerce or politics. Time alone; a good deal of time too, can determine. Be assured I have great need of patience."

Leyden, March 11, 1781, wrote to Mr. De L'Etombe at Paris. "I received your favors of February 4th and 28th, but to day. I am much obliged to you, for giving me the opportunity of sending the enclosed letters to you. I am much afraid my letters will not reach Paris before your departure. You will be able to tell my countrymen more than I know of public affairs. I beg you to warn them against all expectations of peace. The appearances of it are all deceitfully thrown out by the English, who are, under pretence of it, endeavoring to embroil all Europe. I have the honor to be, with the sincerest wishes

for your good voyage, and with the greatest esteem and respect, &c.”

Leyden, March 11, 1781, wrote to Isaac Smith, Esq. “Your favor of the 18th of December, reached me to day. I lament the loss of my letters by Davis. I thank you for the kind news of my family. Mr. Guild is taken, and all my letters, &c. sent by him lost.

I wish I could give you any good news, especially of peace. But alas! there is no hope of it. The English are laboring with all their art and might to spread the flames of war, through all Europe. I know not that they would get or we lose any advantage by that; but such is at present their incendiary temper.

I am glad to learn that the army is to be placed on a more permanent footing. I wish to know the state of commerce and privateering. Your letters, via Spain, always reach me. This will go by Mr. De L’Etombe, the new consul, a valuable man. So thinks yours, &c.”

Leyden, March 11, 1781, wrote to Messrs. John De Neufville and son. “I received this morning your favor of yesterday, with its enclosures. You seem to think that the loan has been opened too soon: but I am not of that opinion. Better too soon than too late. If it had been too late, you see, the time would have been passed, and could never be recalled. But if it is only too soon, there is nothing wanting but a little patience to wait, and the true time will come in its course.

I should be obliged to you to send along the obligations as soon as convenient, that I may sign them and dispose of them. I can find persons in my travels who will take them and give me the money for them. I think to stand my own broker, undertaker, and banker. I should be obliged to you, if you would countersign some of the obligations before you send them to me, because there are persons ready to take some of them. Do not be amused. *The mediation of Russia cannot interrupt or retard our affair.* If that mediation produces nothing and the war goes on, it will not affect our loan. If it produces an acknowledgment of American independence, and

the right of neutral vessels, as it is given out that it will, surely this will not retard our loan. In all cases, be not deceived. I will not. *My business is to try the experiment, in order to know, whether we have credit and friends or not.* If we find we have not, there is no harm done. Every one in that case will follow his own taste, which you know there is no disputing."

Upon this letter a few notes may be necessary. I found by experience, that there was in Holland a public and a secret doctrine among the merchants, capitalists and brokers, like those of the ancient Egyptian priests : and I am afraid there is something too much like it in all countries, and in all ages in society, which sometimes greatly embarrasses honest men and sincere enquirers after truth. A very respectable gentleman told me, " If, sir, you were to write me a letter and ask my opinion whether Mr. De Neufville's house is a solid house, and Mr. De Neufville's credit a solid credit, I should answer you in the affirmative. Yes, a very solid house, and a very solid credit. Nevertheless I caution you, in confidence, to have a care." Mr. De Neufville was generally, and I believe justly, reputed an honest well meaning man : but the knowing ones thought he had not a clear head, and remembered various injudicious speculations in which he had been engaged, which had proved very disadvantageous to him. Such, however, was his public reputation, that I still flattered myself he would obtain something to help me discharge my American bills, and lessen the burden on the court of France, and in this I was encouraged by Mr. Luzac, Mr. Dumas, and several others of my friends, which occasioned my writing as I did in this letter. Again there was an ambitious burgomaster in Amsterdam, Mr. Rendorp, secretly in the interest of the stadtholder and the English, who found means upon this occasion and upon several others, to insinuate discouragement to Mr. De Neufville. And at this time he began to find by experience, that he should dispose of very few, if any, of my obligations, and was very desirous that I should impute his ill success, to the hopes of peace held out by a confused rumor which

began to spread in Europe, of an intended mediation of the two imperial courts. After all, whatever was the cause, my hopes were blasted, as well as those of Mr. De Neufville. I obtained only the three thousand guilders which Mr. Luzac had promised me ; and Mr. De Neufville obtained only two thousand among all his friends.

Leyden, March 12, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dana, at Paris. " I know not whether I have answered your letter of the 12th of February ; that of the 25th came to me yesterday. The letter enclosed was from Mr. Isaac Smith, of the 18th of December. He says they were busily employed in raising their quota for the army during the war, or for three years, and that the other states were doing the same. He says, Mrs. Dana was well a few days before ; and that Davis had arrived, after having thrown over his letters, being chased by an American. This is all. I have letters from the president and Lovel ; the last unintelligible, because in cyphers ; but inexplicable to me by his own cypher. It is some dismal ditty about my letters of the 26th July ; I know not what.

But my dear sir, I hasten to the most interesting part of your letter, your project of a re-passage of the mountains. I shudder at the thought of it, when I consider what a bad traveller you are, and that robbers by the way may take you to their dens. I know not how to part with you. I want your advice now constantly every day ; yet I think you are doing more good where you are, than you could here. I know that by conversation with congress, you might do good, but there are so many hazards, that I dare not advise you. I think with you, that we shall have nothing to do in our principal department ; *yet the mediation of the emperor and empress seems to require attention from us ;* although I am persuaded it is only the artifice of England to embroil all Europe.

I will communicate to you a secret. Let it be kept so. I have received a commission dated the 28th of December, for this republic. I want your advice, but I can ask it by letter, while you are at Paris. I suppose it was the intention of congress, that I should employ Dumas, as my sec-



retary here, but have no orders or hints about it. There is no commission to him, which makes me think that congress intended I should be at liberty to employ him or not, as I shall judge proper. I suppose congress intended to leave the way open to employ him by their not sending a commission to you. Upon the whole I know not how to advise you. We will consider of it, a little longer, if you please.

I can give no assurances, or lively hopes of money or friendship, in this country. They are furious for peace. Multitudes are for peace with England at any rate; even at the expense and risque of joining them in the war against France, Spain, America, and all the rest. They are in a torpor, a stupor, such as I never saw any people in before. But they cannot obtain peace with England, on any other terms than joining her in the war, and this they will not, because they cannot, do. I sometimes think their affections would lead them to do it, if they dared."

Leyden, March 17, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dumas. "I have received this morning your favor of the 16th, enclosing a polite letter from the duke de la Vauguion. I hope to receive another from you this evening, and that it will contain an account of the fate of my memorial. Has it been laid before their high mightinesses or not? And what was done with it? Pray, has the president, by the constitution of this country, a right to pocket, suppress, or deliver to the stadtholder, papers addressed to their high mightinesses?"

Is the delusion almost over? When will mankind cease to be the dupes of the insidious artifices of a British minister, and stockjobber? Peace is a tub easily thrown out, for the amusement of the whale, while the minister opens his budget, concerts his taxes and contracts for his loan, and the tub never fails to be taken for a fish.

This is the best place for business in the world. I have written my name to papers (obligations and coupons) eight or nine thousand times since I saw you. Pray do you know whether Mr. De Neufville has any person at

the Hague to dispose of my obligations ? If he has not, will you think of a proper person as a broker or undertaker, or both, and inform me ?

Of the letter from the French ambassador, acknowledged to be received in the foregoing letter to Mr. Dumas, the following is a literal translation. Knowing perfectly well the game of the count de Vergennes and his ambassador, it was precisely what I expected.

*The Hague, this 14th March, 1781.*

I have received, sir, the letter which you have done me the honor to write me, as well as the copy of the resolution of the congress of the United States of North America, which accompanied it. You inform me that you have made a ministerial communication of it to the president of the assembly of the states general, as well as to the envoys of the courts of Petersburg, Stockholm, and Copenhagen. And you request me to support this measure with my good offices. I am persuaded, sir, that you perfectly perceive the impossibility in which I am, of seconding it, without the express order of the king, whatever may be my personal zeal for the true interest of North America. Receive, sir, the very sincere assurance of the sentiments of the most distinguished consideration, with which I have the honor to be, your most humble and most obedient servant,

THE DUKE DE LA VAUGUION.

*To Mr. JOHN ADAMS, minister plenipotentiary of the United States of North America, at Leyden.*

Leyden, March 18, 1781, wrote to congress. " At length, notwithstanding the mediation of the empress of Russia, the states general have published the following manifesto. It is entitled the counter manifesto of the states general of the United Provinces of the Low Countries.

If ever the annals of the world have furnished an example of a free and independent state hostilely attacked

in the manner the most unjust, and without the least appearance of justice or equity, by a neighboring power, long in alliance and strictly connected by ties founded upon common interest, it is without controversy, the republic of the United Provinces of the low countries, which finds itself in this case, in relation to his majesty, the king of Great Britain and his ministry.

From the commencement of the troubles, arisen between that kingdom and its colonies in America, their high mightinesses, by no means obliged to take the smallest part in them, had formed the firm and invariable design to adopt and to follow, in relation to the troubles, the system of the most perfect and the most exact neutrality. And when the same troubles had afterwards enkindled a war, which extended itself to more than one power, and spread itself to more than one part of the world, their high mightinesses have constantly observed and maintained the same system, while at the same time they have not neglected to give on more than one occasion, and relative to most essential objects, the most convincing proofs of their sincere disposition to satisfy the desires of his majesty as far as they could advance, without wounding the rules of impartiality, and without compromising the right of their sovereignty. It was in these views, and to this end, that their high mightinesses at first, and at the first requisition of his Britannic majesty, published prohibitions the most express, against the exportation of military stores to the colonies of his majesty in America, and against all fraudulent commerce with the same colonies : and to the end that these prohibitions should be executed the more effectually, their high mightinesses did not hesitate, moreover, to take measures, which did not fail to restrain and confine, very greatly, the navigation and the commerce of their own subjects, with the colonies of the state in the West Indies. It was moreover in the same views and to the same end, that their high mightinesses sent orders the most precise, to all the governors and commanders of their colonies, and of their establishments, as well as to all the officers, commanders of their

vessels of war, to take special care, to do nothing towards the flag of the American congress, from whence they might lawfully infer or deduce, an acknowledgment of the independence of the said colonies. And it was, above all, in these views and to this end, that their high mightinesses, having received a memorial, which was presented to them by the ambassador of England, containing complaints the most spirited against the governor of St. Eustatia, condescended to deliberate concerning this memorial, although conceived in terms little accommodated to those respects, which sovereign powers reciprocally owe to each other. This deliberation was soon followed by the recall of the said governor, to render an account of his conduct to their high mightinesses, and whom they did not permit to return to his residence until after he had exculpated himself of all the accusations brought against him, by a justification of himself in detail; a copy of which was transmitted, without delay, to the minister of his Britannic majesty. It was by means of these measures, that their high mightinesses, having always had it at heart to avoid giving the smallest cause of dissatisfaction to his Britannic majesty, have constantly endeavored to entertain and to cultivate his friendship and good understanding.

But the conduct of his Britannic majesty towards the republic has been diametrically opposite.

The troubles between the courts of London and Versailles had scarcely broken out, when we saw the ports of England filled with Dutch ships, unjustly taken and detained. These vessels navigated under the faith of treaties; and were not loaded with other merchandizes, than with those which the express tenor of treaties declared free and lawful. We saw those free cargoes forced to submit to the laws of an arbitrary and despotic authority. The cabinet of St. James knowing no other rules than a pretended right of temporary conveniency, thought proper to appropriate these cargoes to the crown by a forced purchase, and to employ them to the profit of the royal navy. The representations the most energetic and the

most serious, on the part of the high mightinesses, against such proceedings, were to no purpose; and it was in vain that we demanded, in the strongest manner, the treaty of commerce which subsisted between England and the republic. By this treaty the rights and liberties of the neutral flag were clearly defined and stated. The subjects of Great Britain had enjoyed the full advantage of this treaty in the first and the only case, in which it pleased the court of London to remain neuter, while the republic was at war. At present, in the reciprocal case, cannot, without the greatest injustice, refuse the enjoyment of the same advantages to the republic. And as little as his Britannic majesty had a right to take away the advantageous effect of this treaty, from their high mightinesses, as little foundation had he to pretend to turn them from a neutrality which they had embraced; and to force them to plunge themselves into a war, the causes of which had an immediate relation to rights and possessions of his Britannic majesty, originating without the limits of defensive treaties. And, nevertheless, it was this treaty which his majesty, from the commencement of the troubles with the crown of France, made no scruple to infringe and violate. The contraventions and infractions of this treaty on the part of Great Britain, and the arbitrary decisions of the courts of justice of that kingdom, directly contrary to the express sanction of this same treaty, multiplied from day to day. The merchant vessels of the republic, became the innocent victims of exactions and accumulated violences of the English men of war and privateers. Not content with this, even the flag of the state was not spared, but openly insulted and outraged, by the hostile attack of the convoy, under the command of the rear admiral the comte de Byland.—The strongest representations on the part of the state to his Britannic majesty, were useless. The vessels taken from this convoy were declared lawful prizes; and this insult committed against the flag of the republic was soon followed by the open violation of its neutral territory, both in Europe and America. We shall content ourselves

to cite two examples of it. At the island of St. Martins, the vessels of his Britannic majesty attacked and took by force, several vessels which were in the road, under the cannon of the fortrefs, where, according to the inviolable law of nations, these vessels ought to have found a safe asylum. The insolences committed by an English armed vessel, upon the coast of the republic, near the island of Goedereede, furnish a second example of these violences. These insolences were pushed to such a degree that several inhabitants of the island, who were upon the shore where they ought to have thought themselves sheltered from all insult, were exposed by the fire of this vessel to the most imminent danger, which they could not avoid, but by retiring into the interior part of the island. Unheard of proceedings, for which the republic, notwithstanding the strongest and best founded representations, has not been able to obtain the smallest satisfaction.

While affairs were thus in a situation, which left to their high mightinesses, no other alternative, but to see the navigation and the commerce of their subjects upon which depend the prosperity or the ruin of the republic, wholly annihilated, or to come to violent measures against their ancient friend and ally. The magnanimous heart of her majesty the empress of Russia, engaged her to invite the republic with equal affection and humanity, to take measures the most just, and entirely conformable to the treaties which subsist between them and the other powers, to the end, to defend and maintain, conjointly with her imperial majesty, and the other powers of the north, the privileges and immunities, which the law of nations, and the most solemn treaties assure to the neutral flag. This invitation could not but be infinitely agreeable to their high mightinesses, considering that it offered them a means of establishing the protection of the commerce of their subjects upon the most solid foundations ; and opened a way to place their independence in safety from all infraction, without derogating in the least from the alliances contracted both with his Britannic majesty, and with the other belligerent powers.

But it is this same means, which the court of London has endeavored to take away from the republic, by proceeding with precipitation to extremities the most outrageous by the recall of her ambassador, by the publication of a manifesto, containing pretended grievances, and by granting letters of marque, and of pretended reprisals, against the state, its subjects and their goods ; by which this court has but too plainly discovered her designs long since formed, of laying aside the essential interest, which united the two nations, and of breaking the ties of ancient friendship, by attacking this state, by a war the most unjust.

It will not be necessary to refute at length, the reasons and pretended griefs, alledged in the manifesto, to convince every impartial man of their insolidity. It is sufficient to observe in a few words, relative to the offer made by his Britannic majesty, to open friendly conferences, that it was the above mentioned treaty of marine, which alone could make the object of those conferences : that the dispositions of this treaty, conceived in the most expressive terms, could not be liable to any doubt nor equivocation : that this treaty gives to neutral powers the right of transporting freely, in the ports of the belligerent powers, all sorts of naval stores : that the republic, proposing to itself no other end, and desiring of his Britannic majesty no other thing, than the quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the rights stipulated by this treaty, a point so evidently clear, and so incontestably just, could not become the object of a negociation, or of a new convention derogatory to this treaty ; so that their high mightinesses could not persuade themselves, nor shew themselves disposed to renounce voluntarily, rights justly acquired, and to desist from these rights from regard to the court of England ; a renunciation, which being advantageous to one of the belligerent powers, would have been little compatible with the principles of the neutrality ; and by which their high mightinesses would have reposed on the other hand the safety of the state to dangers, which they were obliged carefully to avoid. A renunciation, more-

over, which would have caused to commerce and navigation the principal support of the republic and source of her prosperity, and irreparable prejudice ; since the different branches of commerce strictly connected with each other form an whole, whereof it is impossible to cut off so principal a part, without necessarily causing the destruction and ruin of the whole body : not to mention, that at the same time, that their high mightinesses made with reason a difficulty to accept the proposed conferences they have not a little modified and tempered the actual exercise of their right, by a provisional resolution.

And as to what relates to the succours demanded, their high mightinesses cannot dissemble, that they have never been able to conceive how his Britannic majesty has thought that he could insist, with the least appearance of justice or of equity, upon the succour stipulated by the treaties, at a time when he had already beforehand, withdrawn himself from the obligation which those treaties imposed upon him towards the republic. Their high mightinesses have not been less surprised to see, that, while the troubles in America and their direct consequences could not concern the republic in virtue of any treaty, and that the succour demanded had not been demanded until after the crown of Spain had augmented the number of belligerent powers. His Britannic majesty has nevertheless, taken the occasion of this event, to insist upon his demand with so much earnestness and such an ardor, as if his majesty thought himself to have a right to pretend and to maintain that a war once enkindled between him and any other power, was alone sufficient to oblige the state to grant forthwith, and without any anterior examination, the succours stipulated. The republic, it is true, had obliged itself by the treaties, to assist the kingdom of Great Britain, at all times, when that kingdom should find itself attacked or threatened with an unjust war : and what is more, the republic ought in this case, according to the same treaties, to declare war against the aggressor : but their high mightinesses never pretended to abdicate the right, which flows necessarily from the



nature of every offensive alliance, and which cannot be contested to allied powers, to examine in the first place, and before the granting of succours, or taking part in the war, the principle of the dissensions which have arisen, and the nature of the differences, which have given occasion to it ; as well as also to examine and to weigh thoroughly the reasons and the motives which may establish the *Causus Fœdoris*, and which ought to serve as a basis of the justice and the lawfulness of the war, on the part of that one of the confederated powers, who demands the succour. And there exists no treaty, by which their high mightinesses have renounced the independence of the state, and sacrificed their interests to Great Britain to such a degree, as to deprive themselves of the right of examination so necessary and so indispensable, by engaging themselves to measures, by which they may be considered as obliged in duty to submit to the good pleasure of the court of England, by granting the succours demanded, even when this court, engaged in a quarrel with another power, judges proper to prefer the way of arms to that of a reasonable satisfaction, upon just complaints.

It was not then by a spirit of party, or by the device of a predominant cabal, but after a mature deliberation, and in a sincere desire to maintain the most precious interests of the republic, that the states of the several respective provinces, have all unanimously testified that they were of opinion, that the succour demanded ought to be refused in a manner the most polite ; and their high mightinesses would not have failed to have transmitted to his Britannic majesty, conformable to these resolutions, an answer to the repeated demands of succours, if they had not been prevented by the violent and unheard of attack of the fleet of the state, under the command of rear admiral Byland ; by the refusal to give satisfaction upon a point so grave ; and by the declaration not less strange than unjust, which his majesty thought fit to make, relative to the suspension of the treaties which subsisted between him and the republic : all, so many events, which by requiring deliberations of quite another nature, put an

end to those which had taken place on the subject of the said requisition.

It is in vain and contrary to all truth, that they have endeavored to multiply the number of grievances, by alledging the suppression of the duties of exportation, as a measure tending to facilitate the transportation of naval stores to France ; for besides that this suppression forms an object, which regards the interior direction of commerce, to which all the sovereigns have an incontestable right, and whereof they are not obliged to give an account to any body ; this point has, it is true, been taken into consideration, but has never been concluded : so that these rights are still received upon the ancient footing : and that which is advanced in this regard in the manifesto is found destitute of all foundation, although we cannot refrain from saying, that the conduct of his Britannic majesty towards the republic furnished but too many motives to justify a similar measure, on the part of their high mightinesses.

The discontent of his Britannic majesty, on the subject of what passed with the American Paul Jones, is also quite as ill grounded : already for several years, their high mightinesses had resolved and published every where, precise orders, concerning the admission of privateers and armed vessels of foreign nations, with their prizes, in the ports of their domination ; orders, which to that time had been observed and executed, without the least exception : in the case in question, their high mightinesses could not depart from those orders, in regard to an armed vessel, who, furnished with a commission of the American congress, was found in the road of the Texel, combined with frigates of war of a sovereign power, without erecting themselves into judges, and pronouncing a decision upon matters, in which their high mightinesses were in no wise obliged to take any part, and in which it did not appear to them convenient to the interests of the republic to meddle in any manner. Their high mightinesses, then, thought fit, not to depart from the orders given so long ago, but they resolved to give the most express prohibi-

tion to hinder the said armed vessel from providing herself with warlike stores ; and enjoined upon her to quit the road as soon as possible, without remaining there longer than the time absolutely necessary to repair the damages suffered at sea ; with the formal denunciations, that in case of a longer delay, we should be obliged to compel his departure ; to which end the officer of the state commanding at the said road, took care to make the requisite dispositions, whereof this armed vessel had scarcely time to prevent the effects.

In regard to what has passed in the other parts of the world, the informations which their high mightinesses have received from time to time, from the East Indies, are directly opposite to those which appear to have come under the eyes of his Britannic majesty. The repeated complaints which the directors of the East India company have addressed to their high mightinesses, and which the love of peace has made them stifle in their bosoms, are incontestable proofs of it. And the measures taken with regard to the West Indies, enumerated heretofore, ought to serve in all times, as an irrefragable proof of the sincerity, the zeal, and the attention, with which their high mightinesses have taken it to heart to maintain in those countries, the most exact and the most strict neutrality. And their high mightinesses have never been able to discover the smallest legal proof, of any infraction of their orders in this respect.

As to what concerns the project of an eventual treaty of commerce with North America, conceived by a member of the government of the province of Holland, without any public authority ; and the memorials presented upon this subject by sir Joseph Yorke, the affair happened in the following manner : As soon as the ambassador had presented the memorial of the 10th of November of the last year, their high mightinesses, without stopping at expressions, little suitable among sovereigns with which this memorial was filled, did not delay to commence a deliberation the most serious upon this subject ; and it was by their resolution of the 27th of the same month, that they

did not hesitate to difavow and to difapprove publicly, all which had been done in this refpect. After which they had all reafon to expect that his Britannic majefty would have acquiefced in this declaration, fince he could not be ignorant that their high mightineffes exercife no jurifdiction in the refpective provinces, and that it was to the ftates of the province of Holland to whom, as cloathed like the ftates of the other provinces, with a fovereign and exclufive authority over their fubjects, ought to be remitted an affair relatively to which, their high mightineffes had no reafon to doubt that the ftates of the faid province would act, according to the exigency of the cafe, and conformably to the laws of the ftate and the rules of equity. The earneftnefs, with which fir Jofeph Yorke infifted by a fecond memorial, upon the article of the punifhment, cannot therefore, but appear very ftrange to their high mightineffes. And their furprife increafed ftill more when, three days afterwards, this ambaffador declared verbally to the prefident of their high mightineffes, that if he did not receive that day an answer entirely fatisfactory to his memorial, he fhould be obliged to inform his court of it by exprefs. Their high mightineffes, informed of this declaration, penetrated the importance of it as manifefting vifibly the meafure already refolved in the counfel of the king: and although the eftablifhed customs admit not of deliberations, upon verbal declarations of foreign minifters, they judged it neverthelefs, proper to depart from them upon this occafion, and to order their fecretary to wait on fir Jofeph Yorke, and give him to underftand that his memorial had been taken *ad referendum*, by the deputies of the refpective provinces, conformably to received ufages, and to the conftitution of the government, adding what appears to have been omitted with defign in the manifefto, that they would endeavor to complete an answer to his memorial, as foon as poffible, and as foon as the conftitution of the government would permit. Accordingly a few days after the deputies of Holland, notified to the afsembly of their high mightineffes that the ftates of their province had unanimofofly re-

solved, to require the advice of their court of justice, on the subject of the demand of punishment, charging the said court to give their opinion, the soonest possible, laying aside all other affairs. Their high mightinesses did not fail to transmit forthwith, this resolution to sir Joseph Yorke. But what was not their surprize and their astonishment, when they learnt that this ambassador, after having reviewed his instructions, had addressed a billet to the secretary, by which, accusing this resolution with being evasive, he refused to transmit it to his court ; which obliged their high mightinesses to send the said resolution to the comte de Welderen, their minister at London, with orders to present it as soon as possible to the ministry of his Britannic majesty : but the refusal of this ministry, threw an obstacle in the way of the execution of these orders.

After this explanation of all the circumstances of this affair, the impartial public will be in a condition to set a just value upon the principal motive, or rather pretext, which his Britannic majesty has used, to let loose the reins of his designs against the republic. The affair reduces itself to this : His majesty was informed of a negociation, which should have taken place in the year 1778, between a member of the government of one of the provinces, and a representative of the American congress, which negociation would have had for its object, a project of a treaty of commerce to be concluded between the republic and the said colonies, casu quo, namely, in case the independence of these colonies should have been acknowledged by the crown of England. This negociation, although conditional, and annexed to a condition which depended upon an act to be antecedently performed by his majesty himself : this negociation, which without this act, or this anterior declaration, could not produce the smallest effect, was taken in so ill part by his majesty, and appeared to excite his discontent in such a degree, that he thought fit to require of the state a disavowal and a public disapprobation, as well as a complete punishment and satisfaction. It was forthwith, and without the least delay,

that their high mightinesses granted the first part of the requisition : but the punishment demanded was not in their power, and they could not agree to it without flying in the face of the fundamental constitution of the state. The states of the province of Holland were the only tribunal to which it belonged to take legal cognizance, and to provide for the case, by the ordinary and regular ways. This sovereign, constantly attached to the maxims, which oblige it to respect the authority of the laws, and fully convinced, that the maintenance of the department of justice in all the integrity and impartiality, which are inseparable from it, ought to form one of the firmest supports of the supreme power : this sovereign, constrained by every thing that is most sacred, to defend and to protect the rights and the privileges of its subjects, could not forget itself to such a degree as to subscribe to the will of his Britannic majesty, by giving a blow to these rights and privileges, and by overleaping the bounds prescribed by the fundamental laws of the government. These laws required the intervention of the judiciary department ; and this was accordingly the means which the states resolved to employ, by requiring upon this object the advice of the court of justice established in their province. It is by following this course, that they have displayed before the eyes of his Britannic majesty, of the English nation and of all Europe, the unalterable principles of justice and equity, which characterise the Batavian constitution, and which, in a part so important as the public administration, as is that which regards the exercise of the judiciary power, ought forever to serve as buckler and a rampart against every thing which could hurt the safety and independence of a free nation. It was also by these means, and by following this course, that very far from shutting the road of justice, or evading the demands of punishment, they have on the contrary left a free course to the way of a regular proceeding, and conformable to the constitutional principles of the republic. And it is finally by the same means, that by taking away from the court of London, all pretence of being able to

complain of a denial of justice, they have prevented even to the smallest shadow or appearance of reason, which could authorise this court to use reprisals : to which nevertheless, it has made no scruple to recur, in a manner equally odious and unjust.

But while the state took measures so just and so proper to remove all subject of complaint ; the measure, which was the epocha of the commencement of the rupture, had already been resolved and concluded in the counsel of the king. This counsel had resolved to try all sorts of means, to traverse and hinder, if it had been possible, the accession of the republic to the convention of the powers of the north : and the event has clearly demonstrated, that it is, in hatred and resentment of this convention, that the said court has suffered itself to be drawn in to the part which it has been pleased to take against the republic.

For these causes, and since, that after the repeated outrages and immense losses which the subjects of the republic must have sustained on the part of his majesty the king of Great Britain, their high mightinesses find themselves moreover, provoked and attacked by his said majesty, and forced to employ the means which they have in hand, to defend and avenge the precious rights of their liberty and independence : they assure themselves with the firmest confidence, that the god of armies, the god of their fathers, who by the visible direction of his providence, sustained and delivered their republic in the midst of the greatest dangers, will bless the means which they have resolved to put in operation for their lawful defence, in crowning the justice of their arms, by the succors always triumphant of his almighty protection. While that their high mightinesses will desire with ardor, the moment, when they shall see their neighbor and their ally, now their enemy, brought back to moderate and equitable sentiments : and at this epocha, their high mightinesses will seize, with earnestness, all occasions, which, compatible with the honor and independence of a free state, may tend to reconcile them with their ancient friend and ally.

Thus done and resolved, at the assembly of their high mightinesses, the lords the states general of the United Provinces of the low countries, at the Hague, the 12th day of March, 1781. Etoit paraphé Cocq Van Haester. Plus bas ; Par ordonnance d'iceux etait Signé.

H. FAGEL.

It is remarkable, that their high mightinesses, after so long delays, have chosen for the publication of this manifesto, a time, when the mediation of the empress is depending. This mediation appears in a memorial presented the first of March to the states general. But this must be reserved for my next letter.

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, October 14, 1809.

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#### LETTER L.

THE memorial promised in my last letter, was in these words :

*High and Mighty Lords,*

As soon as her majesty the empress, was informed of the sudden departure from the Hague, of the ambassador of his Britannic majesty to your high mightinesses ; guided by the sentiments of friendship and benevolence which she professes towards the two powers ; she did not wait for further explanations, concerning the consequences which might be produced by a procedure so alarming for their reciprocal tranquility and well being, to make by her minister at the court of London, representations the most pressing, to the end, to divert it, if it were possible, from coming to violent measures, and to induce it rather to prefer those of softness and conciliation ; offering herself to co-operate in every thing which might depend upon her. Although her majesty has not yet had the time to receive the answer of the court of London, she has, nevertheless, reason to presume, that her insinuations there will be received with pleasure. In this confidence, the empress does not hesitate to give new proof of her salutary



intentions in favor of the re-union of two states, for whom she has an equal affection, and whom she has seen for so long a time live together, in an intelligence the most perfect and the most natural to their respective interests ; by proposing to them formally, her good offices, and her mediation, to interrupt and put an entire end to the discord and the war, which has broken out between them. While Mr. Simolin, the minister of the empress, at the court of London, acquits himself of the orders which she has given him, concerning this object, the undersigned has the honor to fulfil the same task, on his part towards your high mightinesses, and to assure you of the zeal and earnestness with which he should desire to labor, at the precious work of the re-establishment of the repose and tranquility of your state. The disinterestedness, the impartiality, and the views of general beneficence, which have instamped their seal upon all the actions of her imperial majesty, preside equally in this. The wisdom and the prudence of your high mightinesses, will know how to acknowledge in her, these august characters, and will dictate the answer, which the subscriber will have to transmit to her, concerning the execution of his orders.

(Signed)

THE PRINCE DE GALLITZIN.

*The Hague, 1st of March, 1781.*

This offer of mediation was accepted by their high mightinesses with gratitude.

Leyden, March 19, 1781, wrote to the president of congress. "I have received your excellency's letter of the first of January, with the commission and instructions enclosed. I am very sensible of this fresh instance of the confidence of congress, and I shall do every thing in my power to discharge the duties of this new trust. But I am obliged to say, that no commission that ever was given, required more patience, fortitude, and circumspection, than this ; virtues which, I much fear, have not fallen in sufficient quantities to my share.

I have experienced, since my residence in this republic, a great change in the external behavior of several persons

of rank, who upon my first arrival, received me with distinction ; but from the moment of the publication of the papers taken with Mr. Laurens, have been afraid to see me. The nation has indeed been in a violent fermentation and crisis. It is divided in sentiments. There are stadtholderians and republicans. There are proprietors in English funds, and persons immediately engaged in commerce. There are enthusiasts for peace and alliance with England ; and there are advocates for an alliance with France, Spain and America. And there is a third sort, who are for adhering in all things to Russia, Sweden and Denmark. Some are for acknowledging American independence, and entering into treaties of commerce and alliance with us : others start at the idea with horror, as an everlasting impediment to a return to the friendship and alliance with England. Some will not augment the navy, without increasing the army ; others will let the navy be neglected rather than augment the army. In this perfect chaos of sentiments and systems, principles and interests ; it is no wonder there is a languor, a weakness and irresolution that is vastly dangerous in the present circumstances of affairs. The danger lies, not more in the hostile designs and exertions of the English, than from seditions and commotions among the people, which are every day dreaded and expected. Were it not for a standing army and troops posted in several cities, it is probable there would have been popular tumults before now. Every body that I see, appears to me to live in constant fear of mobs ; and in a great degree of uncertainty, whether they will rise in favor of war, or against it : in favor of England, or against her : in favor of the prince, or in vindication of Amsterdam : in favor of America, or against her. In the midst of these critical circumstances, pressed as I am for money to discharge the bills of exchange which congress have drawn and I have accepted, I have ventured to open a loan ; but this is looked upon as a very hardy and dangerous measure, which nobody but an American would have risked. And I am obliged to assure congress, that people are as

yet, so much afraid of being pointed out by the mob, or the soldiery, as favorers of this loan, that I have no hopes at all of succeeding for several months, if ever.

I am advised to do nothing in consequence of my commission to the states general, at present, for fear of throwing before the people, new objects of division and dissention. I have, however, communicated to their high mightinesses, and to the ministers of Russia, Denmark, Sweden and France, the resolution of congress of the 5th of October, relative to the principles of the neutral confederation. The memorial and the letters I have transmitted to congress.

Whenever I shall communicate to their high mightinesses, the full powers of congress, the course will be this. They will lie long upon the table. Then taken *ad referendum* : that is, sent to the several provinces, cities and bodies of nobles, who compose the sovereignty, or as some say, the deputies of the sovereignty. These will deliberate, and deliberate, and deliberate ; and probably some will be for, and some against making a treaty ; at least it is supposed that Zealand and one or two other provinces will be against it. But in the mean time, there will be much communication and negociation, among individuals at least, between this country and Russia, Sweden and Denmark, upon the subject : and if it is true, as I am informed in a letter from Mr. Gerry, that a minister is appointed to the court of Petersburg, as I hope it is, and that the same minister, or some other, is empowered to treat with Sweden and Denmark, it is not impossible, I think it indeed probable, that we may succeed with these four nations at once. For let me add, there is not, in my apprehension, the least prospect of a general peace. England is at her old game of seduction and division, and is laboring, under pretence of employing the emperor of Germany and the empress of Russia, in mediations for peace, insidiously to embroil all Europe in the war. From motives of philanthropy, I hope she will not succeed ; unless indeed the same feelings of humanity should prompt me to wish all mankind at war for her humiliation, with

a nation, which at this time is, if ever one was, *hostis humani generis.*”

Leyden, March 19, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dumas.—“The enclosed extracts are of so much importance, that I send them to you for your opinion, whether it is prudent to communicate them to the Russian minister, or not? The intelligence is such that I can make no official communication of it. If you think it will do any good, and no harm, or at least more good than harm, you may communicate it in confidence to friends. Mr. Dana’s commission, which perhaps, is to treat with any or all of the northern powers, is to come by colonel Palfrey, and duplicates by young colonel Laurens, as I conjecture.

I have read the manifesto with pleasure; because it is a reasonable and a manly performance. It would have been better, perhaps, without the last clause: which will be taken both by friends and enemies, as a sigh for peace with England, but much may be said in excuse of it. I wish too they had left out their disapprobation of Amsterdam, which was not necessary, and never did their high mightinesses any honor; at least I venture to think so.”

Leyden, March 21, 1781, wrote to Messrs. John de Neufville and Son. “I have received your favor of the 19th, and will direct Mr. Thaxter to number your bonds again in figures, under your written numbers, and sign them; and to make the other alterations, according to your proposal.

Alas! poor Statia! But as providence orders us unpleasant potions of medicine to cure our distempers, so I hope this apparent misfortune will open the eyes of the blind; will convince the credulous of their weakness in placing any kind of confidence in the justice, the honor, the moderation or humanity of Great Britain; virtues which at this time, exist only in their own vain-glorious writings and speeches: I hope also it will accelerate an immediate and direct commerce with America, and what is of more importance to this country, as well as to that, a solid alliance: I hope, further, that this insult to the neutral confederation, will prompt them to take a decided

part, which their own dignity, honor and interest demand, and forthwith join France, Spain, and America, in pursuit of the two great objects of the negociations and wars of the present age, American independence and the rights of neutral vessels: once more I hope, that this unexampled outrage to the law of nations, to public faith, and every sacred principle among men, will induce even the great city of Amsterdam, to act a more decided and vigorous part, than she has done. Her example will be followed with ardor, by every other member of the sovereignty, all of whom, I have reason to believe, are slackened in their resolution, by the feebleness and irresolution of that city."

Leyden, March 22, 1781, wrote to Mr. Jennings, at Brussels. "With great pleasure have I received yours of the 19th, with its enclosures. I wish I could answer more at large, but in addition to a thousand other objects crowding upon me at present, I have had to sign obligations and coupons, &c.

I am exceedingly pleased with your thoughts, all but one. You hold up the idea of restraining America from the east. This idea never will do. America never will consent to any restriction whatsoever: but will finally insist on a right to trade with every nation that will trade with her. For God's sake, let us beat down every idea of restriction. I am demonstratively certain, it is the interest of every power in Europe to take off every restriction from American trade. It will be longer in this case before the trade of America will interfere with that of any nation, than if it is clogged. *Nitsmur in veltum*. The idea of the least restraint is a poison; it will lay a foundation for embroiling Europe and America, forever. It will occasion another horrid war in seven years. So would a truce. The last lettres Hollandaises are very good. Go on I pray you."

Leyden, March 22, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dana, at Paris. "I have received several letters from you: but have been so busy, signing my name (to obligations and coupons, &c.) that I could not regularly answer.

I give you joy of Laurens' arrival. It is a great event. I hope he brought you an important paper, which Lovell mentions in his letter to you, and Gerry in an excellent one to me.

I rejoice, sir, in your honor and the public good : but I feel myself grieved, and weakened at the personal loss of a treasure of advice and ability. I hope to see you here in your rout. Pray commit to writing all your observations on our first errand, and give them to me. I hope your old commission is not superseded. In case of negotiation, of which, however, there is no likelihood for years, I shall summon you. Mr. Laurens must have letters and important papers for me. I hope to have them soon. There is no one knows the banking commission, but Mr. De Neufville and me. It is not, however, more than precedents. But let them lie about it, if they will. I am not afraid of their lies. Statia is gone : and the Dutch are yet dead : when they will come to life, I know not."

Leyden, March 24, 1781, wrote to Messrs. John De Neufville and son. " I received last night your favor of the 22d, enclosing three bills of exchange, which I have accepted, and return enclosed. I have also received another letter on the affair of St. Eustatia. I sincerely condole with you, on the loss of that island, both as it affects the public, and as it must probably more or less affect your private interest.

Great pains are taken to represent this event as a fatal blow to the United States of America ; at which I can do nothing but laugh. In my private opinion it will be better for America. The property taken in that island, belonging to English, Scotch and Irish merchants, I shrewdly suspect, was more than all that belonged to Americans, French, and even Dutch, altogether. In this I may be mistaken : but in all events the American property there was not much.

However, after the insidious artifices of the English, in holding out false appearances of a disposition for peace ; shall have amused eight or nine nations for a little while ;

when these discover themselves to have been only duped and mocked by English impudence ; this outrage with others, cannot but unite all the maritime nations in one decisive league, in support of the freedom of commerce and American independence, without which it is evident to demonstration that the liberty of the seas cannot longer exist.

Place America again in dependence on Great Britain, and it would be in their joint power, in twenty years, to conquer all the establishments of the Spaniards, French, Dutch and Portuguese in the east and West Indies, in spite of all that the rest of mankind could do to prevent it. I would therefore advise the powers of Europe to let America be reduced to the necessity of proposing terms to Great Britain.”

Leyden, March 27, 1781, wrote to Mr. Dumas at the Hague. “ Since I had the honor to communicate to you my commission to their high mightinesses, by which the general affairs of America in this republic, come under my direction, you may possibly be in some uncertainty about your own situation and the continuance of that small annual sum which you have heretofore received from the commissioners and the minister at the court of Versailles. In order to remove the doubt as far as in my power, I take this method to inform you that I am persuaded it is the intention of congress, that you should continue your good services to their cause, if you have no objection, and that you should have at least the same allowance continued. I suppose his excellency, Dr. Franklin, will readily continue to pay your draught as usual ; but if he should not, and you choose to continue in the service of America under my direction, I will undertake to do it, as long as I shall reside in the republic, at my own risque, until the further order of congress.”

Leyden, March 27, 1781, wrote to Messrs. John De Neufville and son. “ I have just received your's, enclosing the lettres Hollandaises, and thank you for your attention. You give me great joy by your account of the

arrival of a vessel from Bolton. Hope we shall soon hear of more.

As to the loan, I am not indifferent about its success. My own reputation with some people in Europe and America, will depend in some measure upon it. But this has little weight with me. It is of importance to America to have a comptoir or banker in Amsterdam upon whom congress could occasionally draw, as they have at Paris and Madrid. And my instructions from congress are such as rendered it my indispensable duty to open a loan and try the experiment. If it does not succeed, I shall have done my duty; but the same duty will require that I should write an account to congress, and to Dr. Franklin, of its success. To congress, that they may draw their bills in future upon Paris and Madrid. To Dr. Franklin, that he may be able to obtain the money of the court of Versailles, to discharge the bills I have already accepted. In this case, Mr. Grand, the banker in Paris, will give orders, as I expect, to the house of Horneca, Fitzeau, and Co. at Amsterdam, to pay the bills. This, you see, will make it public, that my loan has not succeeded; and the whole will divert that part of the trade of America, which would naturally have flowed to Amsterdam, to France and Spain. Though I shall be mortified at this, there will be one consolation; we shall have no interest to pay, but what we please; and when we please; for the money obtained of those courts, has been generously granted, without any terms whatsoever, respecting the rate of interest or time of payment of interest or principal. We shall be under more obligations at Paris and Madrid, and less elsewhere. I am therefore not anxious, nor will I depart a single doit from the terms, if the whole falls through. I have already gone further than will be for the good of my reputation, or promote the intercourse between the two countries.

The secret intelligence you give me, I am rejoiced to hear. It shall remain a secret with me. I have a great deal of news too, which I must keep a secret at present, but which holds out hopes of great and good things to our righteous



cause. I expect to learn more of it every hour. I enclose Mr. Hodgshon's three bills and your eight."

Leyden, March 27, 1781, wrote to London. "I am very much obliged to you for the trouble you have kindly taken in sending me gazettes, pamphlets and books, but the alteration of circumstances has rendered the communication so difficult and expensive that I am obliged to desist. Two or three packets which you mentioned in a letter not long since, have not arrived, nor have I heard any thing of them.

The gazettes cost me by the post, at a rate of two hundred guineas, I believe, by the year; and I am now in a situation where I have found a way to have all the papers at a comparatively small expense. So that I should be obliged to you to stop immediately, the two papers, the Morning Herald, and General Advertiser; and also the sending any more books and pamphlets. You will be so good as to send me a minute of the balance between us, and whatever it may be in your favor, I will take measures to discharge immediately. I should be obliged to you however, for the continuance of your favors, and the good news of the times."

Leyden, March 28, 1781, wrote to Mr. Jay, at Madrid. "It is so long since I wrote you, that I am almost ashamed to recollect. I have been in the most curious country, among the most incomprehensible people, and under the most singular constitution of government in the world. I have not been able to write you what could or would be done here; because I was not able to discover, nor did I ever yet find one man in the country, who would pretend to say what course the republic would take. At this moment, although I think there cannot be a peace between them and England; yet I see no probability of their being in earnest in the war, for some time.

I can tell you one thing, however, for certain, that the conduct of Spain has great influence here. Her delay, in acknowledging our independence, contributes amazingly to the indecision of the republic. If Spain had entered fully into the system, this country would soon

follow. I must therefore, beg of you to communicate to me, as much concerning this subject as you are at liberty to do. All nations, it is to be feared, will wait for Spain, and thus prolong the evils of war, to unnecessary lengths."

Leyden, April 9, 1781, wrote to Messrs. Sigourney, Ingraham, and Bromfield, at Amsterdam. "I am engaged in some affairs, which will oblige me to be absent from Amsterdam for some days, if not for some weeks; but when I return it will be necessary for me to have a house and furniture suitable for a minister plenipotentiary from the United States, to receive and entertain company; not in the style of sir Joseph Yorke, at eighty thousand guilders a year, but however, decent enough for any character in Europe to dine with a republican citizen." The rest of this letter contains directions concerning the house, furniture, servants to be procured, and authority to draw upon me, &c. for the money, &c.

Leyden, April 10, 1781, wrote to Messrs. Neufville and Son. "I return you the six bills accepted on 29th March. The other detail, 25th February, 1780, I have no letters of advice about. Yet the bill is genuine, I doubt not. Is it a part of some former bills which you accepted? If it is, and the second, third or fourth of the same tenor have not been accepted before, you, I suppose, may receive it from Doctor Franklin, as the others."

Leyden, April 10, 1781, wrote to Doctor Franklin. "Relying on your virtues of faith and hope, I accepted the bills to the amount of ten thousand pounds sterling, drawn in favor of Mr. Tracy.

I have received advice from congress of more bills drawn upon me. When they arrive and are presented, I must write you concerning them, and desire you to enable me to discharge them; for I am sorry to be obliged to say, that although I have opened a loan according to the best plan in my power, and the plan and the loan seem to be countenanced by the public; yet there is little money obtained, scarcely enough to defray the expense

of obligations and stamps. It is daily more and more clear to me, that we shall never obtain a loan here, until our independence is acknowledged by the states. Till then, every man seems to be afraid, that his having any thing to do in it, will be made a foundation of a criminal process, or a provocation to the resentment of the mob.

The time is very near, when some of the bills I accepted become payable. I must intreat your excellency's answer to this, as soon as convenient, and to point out to me whether you choose that the house of Horneca, Fitzeau and Grand, or any other, should pay the money. It is a most grievous mortification to me, to find that America has no credit here, while England certainly still has so much : and to find, that no gentleman in public life here, dares return me a visit, or answer me a letter ; even those who treated me when I first arrived here, with great politeness. I am intreated, however, to keep this secret ; but have no motive to secret it from you : on the contrary, you ought to know it. I am told there will be great alterations very soon. But I have seen by experience, that no man in this country knows what will be, on the morrow. Let me ask the favor of you, sir, to give my best respects to colonel Laurens, &c."

Leyden, April 11, 1781, wrote to Messrs. Sigourney, Ingraham, and Bromfield. " I am this moment favored with your's of the 10th, and thank you for the readiness with which you have undertaken to get me a house as soon as possible."

Here follow directions in detail concerning the house, furniture, servants, carriage, &c. which I, of all men, was the least qualified to prescribe, having never troubled my head about any such things. Omitting these, the letter proceeded—" I have determined to reside at Amsterdam, for the facility of transacting the business of the merchants who have bills of exchange upon me ; for the pleasure of seeing more of our countrymen, than I could see in any other city ; and for the pleasure of some agreeable acquaintances I have formed at Amsterdam. But our countrymen ought to be apprised that there is unhappily

a difference of sentiment between the court at the Hague and Amsterdam, and that my residing in that city may be liable to misrepresentation, if the motives of it are not understood.”

Leyden, April 13, 1781, wrote another letter to Signourney, Ingraham, and Bromfield, containing still more particular directions concerning the house, furniture, &c. &c. and authorising them to draw upon me or my bankers for cash to pay all their expenses, &c.

Leyden, April 16, 1781, wrote to Dr. Franklin. “I had yesterday the honor of your’s of the 7th. The letter enclosed is a bitter satire on the nation which produced it. Is it possible that Arnold should shew his face among men, after writing such a letter? If it is not a bribe, it is robbery committed in the American service; for it is well known that Arnold had no such sum when the war began. He is now employed in stealing tobacco and negroes: so is Cornwallis. A fair employment for peers; for Arnold is the peer of them all! I think the southern states will have the honor, after all, of putting the continent in a right way, to finish the business of the war. There has been more sheer fighting there than any where.

All the public papers, English, French, and Dutch, assure the world that I have succeeded in a loan. I wish they would prove their words. I am told it will do by and by; so I am, that the nation will act vigorously by and by. I wish both may prove true; but I have not one grain of your faith nor hope.

There are capitalists who believe us able and honest to pay; and that we shall prevail; and they have inclinations enough, they say, to the loan; but the true motive of their conduct is fear of being pointed out to mobs and soldiers as persons who have contributed to the commencement or continuance of the war with England. I wrote you some days ago, that I had not succeeded at all, and requesting your orders how the bills accepted should be paid. Some of them become payable the beginning of May; and the fifteenth of that month, the sixty bills, amounting to ten thousand pounds sterling, which were

drawn in favor of Mr. Tracy, become due. I congratulate you on your success at Versailles. If Spain would make a treaty with Mr. Jay, it would assist us here. Every body asks, why does Spain delay? You and I know very well, but cannot tell. But so it is. *Men always negociate ill, when they are not in a condition to make themselves feared.* If America could dissemble enough to threaten other nations with a return to Great Britain, they would be ready to hang themselves, to prevent it. But America is too honest and sincere to play such a game. England would have all the mountains of Mexico and Peru in a few years, if America should join her. Yet we are slighted. God forgive them and enable America to forget their ungenerosity.

America has fought Great Britain and Ireland six years; and not only Great Britain and Ireland, but many states of Germany, many tribes of Indians, and many negroes, their allies. Great Britain has been moving earth and hell to obtain allies against us, yet it is improper in us to propose an alliance. Great Britain has borrowed all the superfluous wealth of Europe; in Italy, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and some even in France, to murder us! yet it is dishonorable in us to propose to borrow money! By Heavens! I would make a bargain with all Europe, if it lay with me. Let all Europe stand still; neither lend men nor money, nor ships to England nor America: let them fight it out alone. I would give my share of millions for such a bargain. America is treated unfairly and ungenerously by Europe. But thus it is, mankind will be servile to tyrannical masters, and basely devoted to vile idols.

JOHN ADAMS."

Quincy, October 21, 1809.

## LETTER LI.

THE black cloud that hung over the whole of the seven provinces ; the solemn gloom that pervaded the whole nation ; the universal uncertainty and timidity that had seized upon all minds, determined me to bring my own mission to a trial. If I should be rejected and ordered out of the country, our situation would not be worse. If I should be received, my object would be gained : but if I should neither be received nor rejected, but taken *ad referendum*, as the most intelligent men assured me I should be, I should then stand in a fair diplomatic character, waiting the result of the national deliberations, under the protection of the government, the public faith, and the national honor. Both myself and my friends would be in a situation of more safety and security. I determined therefore, to communicate my commission and credentials to the government : both to their high mightinesses and to the stadtholder. I wrote my memorials and signed them on the nineteenth of April, 1781 : one to the states general, the other to the prince of Orange. It was my wish that Mr. Luzac, who wrote admirably well in French, by the acknowledgment of all Europe, should translate the memorials into French, but Mr. Dumas was very desirous of performing that service ; and Mr. Luzac undertook to get it translated into Dutch by his brother-in-law, a bookseller, printer, and editor of a gazettee at Delpht, who had the reputation of one of the most masterly writers in the nation in their own language.

Amsterdam, April 27, 1781, wrote to Dr. Franklin. “I have received your excellency’s letter of the 21st, and will send you the list of the bills, and of the times of their becoming due, according to your desire, as soon as I can make it out. I will examine Mr. De Neufville’s bill, and if I find it good, accept it.

From the time I received from congress, their orders to borrow money here, I have constantly requested in my letters, that no draughts might be made upon me, until there should be news from me, that I had money to dis-

charge them, and this request I shall repeat ; but the cry of the army for cloaths, induces congress to venture upon measures, which appear hazardous to us. However, by the intelligence I have, they had grounds to expect that the draughts hitherto made, would be honored.

I have sometimes thought, however paradoxical it may seem, that one sett of bills protested, would immediately procure congress a loan. No bills are in better credit than these. There is an appetite here for American trade as ravenous as that of a shark for his prey : and if they saw a prospect of having their commerce broken up, they would do much to save it.

I have the honor to acquaint your excellency, that I sometime ago received from congress full powers to conclude with the states general of the United Provinces of the low countries, concerning a treaty of amity and commerce ; and that I have very lately received a letter of credence as minister plenipotentiary to their high mightinesses ; and another to his serene highness the prince of Orange. Being thus fixed to this country for the present, I have taken a house in Amsterdam, on the Keizerstraat, near the Spiegel Straat, for the convenience of our countrymen who have occasion to visit me, and of merchants who have bills upon me, until their high mightinesses shall have taken the necessary time to deliberate upon it and determine to acknowledge the independence of the United States, enter into treaties with them and receive me at the Hague. If this should happen I hope we should obtain a credit here ; but we never shall before."

About this time, considering the connection between the United States and France, it was very obvious that prudence required I should communicate my design to the French ambassador. I was not, however, without apprehensions of the consequence of it, for I could not doubt that the count de Vergennes had information of my appointment sooner than I had, and I had a thousand reasons to believe that my whole system in Holland, and even my residence in it was disagreeable to him. I might presume, and I did presume, that the duke had instructions

from the count to counteract me. But the inconveniences that would arise from concealing my design from the French ambassador, appearing to overbalance those in the other scale, I wrote to his excellency information that I had received from congress full powers and credentials as a minister plenipotentiary to the states general and the prince of Orange. I received a reply from the duke immediately, "that he had received my letter, but that I had not informed him whether it was my design to present my full powers to their high mightinesses: if such was my intention, he desired a previous conference with me. I went immediately to the Hague, and made my visit to the hotel de France. The duke entered at once into conversation with me to dissuade me from presenting my credentials. He detained me two hours. I answered all his questions, and replied to all his arguments. But as is usual, neither was convinced, and I took my leave with as full a determination as ever to pursue my plan. The next morning at eight o'clock, the duke appeared at my lodgings, at the principal inn of the city, at the sign of the parliament of England, and renewed his efforts to divert me from my purpose. He went over all the ground we had trod the day before, and ran about all Europe, especially the northern maritime confederation, to find arguments against the step I proposed to take. Although his topics appeared to me extremely frivolous, I listened to them with all the respect which was due to the ambassador of France, and to the personal character of the duke which I sincerely esteemed. It is but justice to say, that in all my intercourse with the duke de la Vaguion, I was uniformly treated by him, his duchess, their children and domestics, with the utmost politeness, and indeed with the freedom and familiarity of friendship.

In this transaction I committed two faults: 1. In not insisting that these discussions should be in writing. 2. In not committing them to writing when they were fresh in my mind. The only excuse that can be made for both is, that I had not time. Too many objects pressed upon me at once. At the distance of eight and twenty years,



it would be in vain to attempt a recollection of them by memory, and they must be lost forever, unless some future Dalrymple or Fox, after a century or two, should find access to the diplomatic archives of France, and there find some account of them in the duke's dispatches to his court.

The duke detained me between four and five hours at this second interview, urging all the time his objections and reasons against my going to the states. There was no solidity in them; I knew them to be mere pretexts.

At last, when he found I was not convinced, he desired me to postpone my visit to the president of their high mightinesses, until he could write to the count de Vergennes and have his opinion. I answered, by no means: Why? Because I know beforehand the count's opinion will be point blank against me; and I had rather proceed against his judgment without officially knowing his opinion, than with it, as I am determined in all events to go. The duke had one resource still left. It was to persuade me to join him or let him alone, in writing a request to the king of France, that he would order his ambassador to unite with me, in my endeavors to obtain an acknowledgment of my public character. I answered again, by no means: Why? Because monsieur le duke, if I must speak out in plain English, or plain French, I know the decision of the king's council will be directly and decidedly against me; and I am decidedly determined to go to the president, though I had a resolution of the king in council against me, and before my eyes. Besides, the moments are critical, and there is no time to be lost—whereas, the correspondence and negotiations you propose may be spun out for years. Moreover, I think that neither the king nor his ministers ought to commit themselves in this business. What! said the duke? Will you take the responsibility of it upon yourself? Indeed, monsieur le duke, I will; and I think I alone ought to be responsible; and that no other ambassador, minister, council or court, ought to be answerable for any thing concerning it. “Are you willing to be responsible then?” In-

deed I am, and upon my head may all the consequences of it rest. "Are you then determined?" Determined, and unalterably determined I am.

The duke upon hearing this, changed his countenance and the tone of his voice, and said very pleasantly—well I can say no more. If you are determined, and actually go to the states general, though it will be against my opinion and advice, and although I can give you no assistance in my official capacity, yet as a man and an individual, I will give you all the countenance in my power. I thanked his excellency for his declaration, which I received in the most friendly manner; and assured him it was all the aid I expected or desired, as I fully agreed with him that neither his public character or the conduct of his court ought in any manner or degree to be compromised in the affair.

Notwithstanding all this, after our treaty was made with Holland, the count de Vergennes ordered the French minister to announce formally to congress, in the name of the king, that his majesty had assisted the United States in forming the connection between them and the states general of the United Provinces; and his majesty received a formal vote of thanks from congress, for that favor.

Leyden, May 3, 1781, wrote to congress. "On the first day of May, I went to the Hague, and wrote to his excellency Peter Van Bleiswick, grand pensioner of Holland, that having something of importance to communicate to him, I proposed to do myself the honor of waiting on him the next morning, at half after eight, if that time should be agreeable to him; but if any other hour would be more convenient, I requested his excellency to mention it. The answer, which was not in writing, was, that half after eight should be the time. Accordingly, the next morning, I waited on him, and was politely received. I informed him that I had asked his permission to make him this visit in order to communicate to him that I had received from my sovereign, the United States of America full powers to treat with the states general, and a letter

of credence as a minister plenipotentiary to their high mightinesses ; and another to his most serene highness the prince ; and that it was my intention to communicate those powers and letters to their high mightinesses, and to his most serene highness, on Friday next, the 4th of May.

His excellency said he would acquaint the states and his highness with it : that in his private opinion, he thought favorably of it ; but that he must wait the orders of his masters ; that it was a matter somewhat delicate for the republic. I replied, that I hoped the delicacy of it, in the present state of open and declared war between England and Holland, would not be considered as an obstacle. That I thought it the interest of the republic, as well as of America, that they should unite. His excellency rejoined, “ one thing is certain, we have a common enemy.”

As this was a visit simply to impart my design ; and I knew enough of the delicate situation of this minister, and of his reputed sentiments, to be sensible that he did not wish to enter into any very particular conversation at this time upon public affairs, I here rose to take my leave. His excellency asked me if I had any good news from America ? I answered, none very late. He then said, he should be glad to form an acquaintance with me. I answered, this would be very flattering to me, and thus took my leave.

To-morrow morning I propose to go to the president of their high mightinesses, to secretary Fagel, and to the secretary of the prince of Orange. This moment, for the first time, I have received the congress account of general Morgan’s glorious victory over Tarlton.”

Amsterdam, May 7, 1781, wrote to congress. “ On the fourth of May, I did myself the honor to visit Peter Van Bleiswick, grand pensionary of Holland, and presented him with a letter containing a copy of my memorial to the states general, &c. His excellency said, that it was necessary for me to go to the president and secretary of their high mightinesses ; and that it was not customary

for foreign ministers to communicate any thing to the pensionary of Holland. I observed that I had been advised by the French ambassador, (as indeed I had been by many others) to present copies to him, and they were only copies which I had the honor to offer him. He said he could not receive them : that I must go to the president ; but said his excellency, it is proper for me to apprise you, that the president will make a difficulty, or rather will refuse to receive any letter or paper from you, because the state you say you represent, is not yet acknowledged to be a sovereign state by the sovereign of this nation. The president will hear what you have to say to him ; make report of it to their high mightinesses ; and they will transmit it to the several provinces, for the deliberation of the various members of the sovereignty. I thanked his excellency for this information, (though there was nothing in it new to me) and departed.

I then presented myself to the president of their high mightinesses for the week, the baron Linden de Hemmen, a deputy of the province of Guelderland, to whom I communicated, that I had lately received from my sovereign, the United States of America, in congress assembled, a commission with full powers and instructions to treat with the states general, concerning a treaty of amity and commerce ; that I had also received a letter of credence as minister plenipotentiary to their high mightinesses ; and requested him to lay before their high mightinesses, either the originals, or a memorial, in which I had done myself the honor to state all these facts, and to enclose copies.

The president said that he could not undertake to receive from me either the originals or any memorial, because America was not yet acknowledged as a sovereign state, by the sovereign of this country ; but that he would make report to their high mightinesses of all that I had said to him, and that it would become the subject of deliberation in the several provinces. That he thought it a matter of great importance to the republic. I answered, I was glad to hear him say he thought it important ; for

it appeared to me to be the interest of the two republics to become united.

After having apprised him that in the present circumstances, I thought it would be my duty to make public my application to their high mightinesses, I thanked him for his politeness, and retired.

I had prepared copies of the memorial and all the other papers for the secretary, Mr. Fagel : but as the president had refused to receive the originals, it was obviously inconsistent for the secretary to receive copies. I therefore omitted the visit to his office.

I then went to the baron de Ray, the secretary of the prince, with a letter addressed to his most serene highness, containing a memorial, informing him of my credentials to his court, and copies of the memorial to their high mightinesses. The secretary received me politely, accepted the letter, and promised to present it to the stadtholder. He requested to know where I lodged ? and was informed at the parliament of England.

Having returned to my apartments at the inn, I heard about two hours afterwards, that the prince had been to the assembly of the states general for about half an hour. In about another hour, the servant of the house announced to me the baron de Ray. I went to receive him, and invited him into my apartment ; he entered and said, that he was charged on the part of the prince with his highness' compliments to me, and to inform me, that as the independence of my country was not yet acknowledged by the sovereign of his, he could not receive the letter from me ; and therefore requested that I would take it back, which I did respectfully. The secretary then politely said, he was very much obliged to me for having given him an opportunity to see my person, and took his leave.

The president made report to their high mightinesses, as soon as they assembled, and his report was ordered to be recorded. Whereupon the deputies of each of the seven provinces demanded copies of the record, to be transmitted to the respective regencies, for their delibera-

tion and decision ; or in the technical language of the laws of this country, it was taken *ad referendum* on the same day.

The next morning I made a visit to the French ambassador, the duke de la Vauguion, and acquainted him with all the steps I had taken. He said he still persisted in his opinion that the time was not the most favorable ; but as the measure was taken, he would as an individual, (but not as an ambassador) support and promote it to the utmost of his power.

It would require a large space to explain all the reasons and motives which I had for choosing the present time in preference to a later ; but I think I can demonstrate, that every moment's delay would have been attended with danger and inconvenience. All Europe is in a crisis, and this ingredient thrown in at this time, will have more effect than at any other. At a future time, I may enlarge upon this subject.

At the foot of this letter to congress, I find in my hand writing a note, February 20, 1782. The late evacuation of the barrier towns, and demolition of their fortifications, may serve as a comment on the duke de la Vauguion's opinion against the point of time. But if it shews that he was right for his country, it shews also, that I was right for mine. And the Dutch only have been wrong in being blind.

I had been very busily and confidentially employed in consultations with my Dutch friends, many of whom were members of the sovereignty, and among the best characters and most respectable men in the nation. I had not taken a step without their advice and full approbation. They were unanimously of my opinion that our American negotiations both for a political and commercial connection, and for a loan of money, should be kept as distinct as possible from all French influence. They were also unanimous for sending a copy in three languages to every member of the constitutional sovereignty in all the provinces, amounting in the whole to between four and five

thousand persons. This was accordingly done. The memorial you will have in the next letter.

JOHN ADAMS.

*Quincy, November 3, 1809.*

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LETTER LII.

IN my last letter I mentioned the following

*MEMORIAL*

To their high mightinesses the states general of the United Provinces of the low countries.

*High and Mighty Lords,*

The subscriber has the honor to propose to your high mightinesses, that the United States of America, in congress assembled, have lately thought fit to send him a commission (with full powers and instructions) to confer with your high mightinesses concerning a treaty of amity and commerce, an authentic copy of which he has the honor to annex to this memorial.

At the times when the treaties between this republic and the crown of Great Britain were made, the people, who now compose the United States of America, were a part of the English nation; as such, allies of the republic, and parties to those treaties; entitled to all their benefits, and submitting cheerfully to all their obligations.

It is true, that when the British administration, renouncing the ancient character of Englishmen for generosity, justice and humanity, conceived the design of subverting the political systems of the colonies; depriving them of the rights and liberties of Englishmen, and reducing them to the worst of all forms of government, starving the people by blockading the ports, and cutting off their fisheries and commerce; sending fleets and armies to destroy every principle and sentiment of liberty, and to consume their habitations and their lives; making contracts for foreign troops, and alliances with savage nations to assist them in their enterprise; casting formally, by act of par-

liament, three millions of people at once out of the protection of the crown ; then, and not till then, did the United States of America, in congress assembled, pass that memorable act, by which they assumed an equal station among the nations.

This immortal declaration, of the 4th of July, 1776, when America was invaded by an hundred vessels of war, and according to estimates laid before parliament, by 55,000 of veteran troops, was not the effect of any sudden passion, or enthusiasm ; but a measure which had been long in deliberation among the people, maturely discussed in some hundreds of popular assemblies, and by public writings in all the states : it was a measure which congress did not adopt until they had received the positive instructions of their constituents in all the states : it was then unanimously adopted by congress, subscribed by all its members, transmitted to the assemblies of the several states, and by them respectively accepted, ratified and recorded among their archives ; so that no decree, edict, statute, placart or fundamental law of any nation was ever made with more solemnity, or with more unanimity or cordiality adopted, as the act and consent of the whole people, than this : and it has been held sacred to this day by every state, with such unshaken firmness, that not even the smallest has ever been induced to part from it, although the English have wasted many millions, and vast fleets and armies, in the vain attempt to invalidate it. On the contrary, each of the thirteen states has instituted a form of government for itself under the authority of the people ; has erected its legislature in the several branches ; its executive authority with all its offices ; its judiciary department and judges ; its army, militia, revenue, and some of them their navy : and all those departments of government have been regularly and constitutionally organized under the associated superintendancy of congress, now these five years, and have acquired a consistency, solidity and activity, equal to the oldest and most established governments. It is true, that in some speeches and writings of the English it is still contended, that the peo-



ple of America are still in principle and affection with them : but these assertions are made against such evident truth and demonstration, that it is surprizing they should find at this day one believer in the world. One may appeal to the writings and recorded speeches of the English for the last seventeen years, to shew, that similar misrepresentations have been incessantly repeated through that whole period, and that the conclusion of every year has in fact confuted the confident assertions and predictions of the beginning of it. The subscriber begs leave to say from his own knowledge of the people of America, (and he has a better right to obtain credit, because he has better opportunity to know, than any Briton whatsoever) that they are unalterably determined to maintain their independence. He confesses, that notwithstanding his confidence through his whole life in the virtuous sentiments and uniformity of character among his countrymen, their unanimity has surprized him : that all the power, arts, intrigues, and bribes, which have been employed in the several states, should have seduced from the standard of virtue so contemptible a few, is more fortunate than could have been expected. This independence stands upon so broad and firm a bottom of the people's interests, honor, consciences and affections, that it will not be affected by any successes the English may obtain either in America, or against the European powers at war, nor by any alliances they can possibly form ; if indeed in so unjust and desperate a cause they can obtain any. Nevertheless, although compelled by necessity, and warranted by the fundamental laws of the colonies, and of the British constitution, by principles avowed in the English laws, and confirmed by many examples in the English history, by principles interwoven into the history and public right of Europe, in the great examples of the Helvetic and Belgic confederacies, and many others ; and frequently acknowledged and ratified by the diplomatic body, principles founded in eternal justice, and the laws of God and nature, to cut asunder forever, all the ties which had connected them with Great Britain : yet the people of Amer-

ica did not consider themselves as separating from their allies, especially the republic of the United Provinces, or departing from their connections with any of the people under their government ; but, on the contrary, they preserved the same affection, esteem and respect for the Dutch nation, in every part of the world, which they and their ancestors had ever entertained.

When sound policy dictated to congress the precaution of sending persons to negotiate natural alliances in Europe, it was not from a failure in respect that they did not send a minister to your high mightinesses, with the first whom they sent abroad : but instructed in the nature of the connections between Great Britain and the republic, and in the system of peace and neutrality, which she had so long pursued, they thought proper to respect both so far, as not to seek or embroil her with her allies, to excite divisions in the nation, or lay embarrassments before it. But, since the British administration, uniform and persevering in injustice, despising their allies, as much as their colonists and fellow subjects ; disregarding the faith of treaties, as much as that of royal charters ; violating the law of nations, as they had before done the fundamental laws of the colonies and the inherent rights of British subjects, have arbitrarily set aside all the treaties between the crown and the republic, declared war, and commenced hostilities, the settled intentions of which they had manifested long before ; all those motives, which before restrained the congress, cease ; and an opportunity presents of proposing such connections, as the United States of America have a right to form, consistent with the treaties already formed with France and Spain, which they are under every obligation of duty, interest, and inclination to observe sacred and inviolate ; and consistent with such other treaties, as it is their intention to propose to other sovereigns.

If there was ever among nations a natural alliance, one may be formed between the two republics. The first planters of the four northern states found in this country an asylum from persecution, and resided here from the

year one thousand six hundred and eight, to the year one thousand six hundred and twenty, twelve years preceding their migration. They ever entertained and have transmitted to posterity, a grateful remembrance of that protection and hospitality, and especially of that religious liberty they found here, having sought it in vain in England.

The first inhabitants of two other states, New-York and New-Jersey, were immediate emigrants from this nation, and have transmitted their religion, language, customs, manners and character; and America in general, until her connections with the house of Bourbon, has ever considered this nation as her first friend in Europe, whose history, and the great characters it exhibits, in the various arts of peace, as well as achievements of war by sea and land, have been particularly studied, admired and imitated in every state.

A similitude of religion, although it is not deemed so essential in this as in former ages to the alliance of nations, is still, as it ever will be thought, a desirable circumstance. Now it may be said with truth, that there are no two nations, whose worship, doctrine, and discipline, are more alike, than those of the two republics. In this particular, therefore, as far as it is of weight, an alliance would be perfectly natural.

A similarity in the forms of government, is usually considered as another circumstance, which renders alliances natural; and although the constitutions of the two republics are not perfectly alike, there is yet analogy enough between them, to make a connection easy in this respect.

In general usages, and in the liberality of sentiments in those momentous points, the freedom of enquiry, the right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience, of so much importance to be supported in the world, and imparted to all mankind, and which at this hour are in more danger from Great Britain and that intolerant spirit which is secretly fomenting there, than from any other quarter, the two nations resemble each other more than any others.

The originals of the two republics are so much alike, that the history of one seems but a transcript from that of the other : so that every Dutchman instructed in the subject, must pronounce the American revolution just and necessary, or pass a censure upon the greatest actions of his immortal ancestors : actions which have been approved and applauded by mankind, and justified by the decision of Heaven.

But the circumstance, which perhaps in this age has stronger influence than any other in the formation of friendships between nations, is the great and growing interest of commerce; of the whole system of which through the globe, your high mightinesses are too perfect masters, for me to say any thing that is not familiarly known. It may not however be amiss to hint, that the central situation of this country, her extensive navigation, her possessions in the East and West-Indies, the intelligence of her merchants, the number of her capitalists, and the riches of her funds, render a connection with her very desirable to America :—and on the other hand, the abundance and variety of the productions of America, the materials of manufactures, navigation and commerce ; the vast demand and consumption in America of the manufactures of Europe, of merchandizes from the Baltic, and from the East-Indies, and the situation of the Dutch possessions in the West-Indies, cannot admit a doubt, that a connection with the United States would be useful to this republic. The English are so sensible of this, that notwithstanding all their professions of friendship, they have ever considered this nation as their rival in the American trade ; a sentiment which dictated and maintained their severe act of navigation, as injurious to the commerce and naval power of this country, as it was both to the trade and the rights of the colonists. There is now an opportunity offered to both, to shake off this shackle forever. If any consideration whatever could have induced them to have avoided a war with your high mightinesses, it would have been the apprehension of an alliance between the two republics : and it is easy to fore-

see, that nothing will contribute more to oblige them to a peace, than such a connection once completely formed. It is needless to point out particularly, what advantages might be derived to the possessions of the republic in the West-Indies from a trade opened, protected and encouraged between them and the continent of America ; or what profits might be made by the Dutch East-India company, by carrying their effects directly to the American market ; or how much even the trade of the Baltic might be secured and extended by a free intercourse with America, which has ever had so large a demand, and will have more for hemp, cordage, sail-cloth and other articles of that commerce : how much the national navigation would be benefited by building and purchasing ships there : how much the number of seamen might be increased, or how much advantage to both countries, to have their ports mutually opened to their men of war and privateers and their prizes.

If therefore an analogy of religion, government, original, manners, and the most extensive and lasting commercial interests, can form a ground and an invitation to political connections, the subscriber flatters himself, that in all these particulars. the union is so obviously natural, that there has seldom been a more distinct designation of providence to any two distant nations to unite themselves together.

It is further submitted to the wisdom and humanity of your high mightinesses, whether it is not visibly for the good of mankind, that the powers of Europe, who are convinced of the justice of the American cause, (and where is one to be found that is not ?) should make haste to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and form equitable treaties with them, as the surest means of convincing Great Britain of the impracticability of her pursuits ? whether the late marine treaty concerning the rights of neutral vessels, noble and useful as it is, can be established against Great Britain, who will never adopt it, nor submit to it, but from necessity, without the independence of America ? whether the return of America,

with her nurseries of seamen and magazines of materials for navigation and commerce, to the domination and monopoly of Great Britain, if that were practicable, would not put the possessions of other nations beyond seas wholly in the power of that enormous empire, which has been long governed wholly by the feeling of its own power, at least without a proportional attention to justice, humanity, or decency. When it is obvious and certain, that the Americans are not inclined to submit again to the British government, on the one hand, and that the powers of Europe ought not and could not with safety consent to it, if they were, on the other; why should a source of contention be left open, for future contingencies to involve the nations of Europe in still more bloodshed, when, by one decisive step of the maritime powers, in making treaties with a nation long in possession of sovereignty by right and in fact, it might be closed?

The example of your high mightinesses would, it is hoped, be followed by all the maritime powers, especially those which are parties to the late marine treaty; nor can apprehension, that the independence of America would be injurious to the trade of the Baltic, be any objection. This jealousy is so groundless, that the reverse would happen. The freight and insurance in voyages across the Atlantic are so high, and the price of labor in America so dear, that tar, pitch, turpentine and ship timber never can be transported to Europe at so cheap a rate, as it has been and will be afforded by countries round the Baltic. This commerce was supported by the English before the revolution with difficulty, and not without large parliamentary bounties. Of hemp, cordage and sail cloth there will not probably be a sufficiency raised in America for her consumption in many centuries, for the plainest of all reasons, because these articles may be imported from Amsterdam, or even from Peterburg and Archangel, cheaper than they can be raised at home. America will therefore be for ages a market for these articles of the Baltic trade.

Nor is there more solidity in another supposition, propagated by the English to prevent other nations from pursuing their true interests, that the colonies of other nations will follow the example of the United States. Those powers, who have as large possessions as any beyond seas, have already declared against England, apprehending no such consequences. Indeed there is no probability of any other power of Europe following the example of England, in attempting to change the whole system of the government of colonies, and reducing them by oppression to the necessity of governing themselves: and without such manifest injustice and cruelty on the part of the metropolis, there is no danger of colonies attempting innovations. Established governments are founded deep in the hearts, the passions, the imaginations and understanding of the people; and without some violent change from without, to alter the temper and character of the whole people, it is not in human nature to exchange safety for danger, and certain happiness for precarious benefits.

It is submitted to the consideration of your high mightinesses, whether the system of the United States, which was minutely considered and discussed, and unanimously agreed on in congress in the year 1776, in planning the treaty they proposed to France, to form equitable commercial treaties with all the maritime powers of Europe, without being governed or monopolized by any: a system which was afterwards approved by the king, and made the foundation of the treaties with his majesty: a system to which the United States have hitherto constantly adhered, and from which they never will depart, unless compelled by some powers declaring against them, which is not expected, is not the only means of preventing this growing country from being an object of everlasting jealousies, rivalries and wars among the nations. If this idea is just, it follows, that it is the interest of every state in Europe to acknowledge American independency immediately. If such benevolent policy should be adopt-

ed, the new world will be a proportional blessing to every part of the old.

The subscriber has the further honor of informing your high mightinesses that the United States of America, in congress assembled, impressed with an high sense of the wisdom and magnanimity of your high mightinesses and of your inviolable attachment to the rights and liberties of mankind, and being desirous of cultivating the friendship of a nation, eminent for its wisdom, justice and moderation, have appointed the subscriber to be their minister plenipotentiary to reside near you, that he may give you more particular assurances of the great respect they entertain for your high mightinesses, beseeching your high mightinesses to give entire credit to every thing, which their said minister shall deliver on their part, especially when he shall assure you of the sincerity of their friendship and regard. The original letter of credence, under the seal of congress, the subscriber is ready to deliver to your high mightinesses, or to such persons as you shall direct to receive it. He has also a similar letter of credence to his most serene highness the prince Stadtholder.

All which is respectfully submitted to the consideration of your high mightinesses, together with the propriety of appointing some person, or persons, to treat on the subject of his mission, by

J. ADAMS.

Leyden, April 19, 1781."

JOHN ADAMS.

Quincy, November 4, 1809.









